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Opportunities to increase value: The semFYC experience

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Background & Aim: The use of unnecessary tests and treatments contributes to health care waste (overutilization, overuse, overtreatment). During the last two years, the program of the Spanish Society of Family and Community Medicine (semFYC) called “Not to do” identified some of such items. This report describes the identification of the tests and the treatments from the primary care point of view.

Method: S: Each year (2014; 2015) an expert panel of 15 individuals identified candidate tests and treatments. The list was narrowed over a modified Delphi process. The top test and treatments were provided with Grading of Recommendation, Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) literature summaries.

Results: The expert panel achieved consensus on the following top items: Reduce antibiotic use for acute maxillary sinusitis, sore throat, acute lower-respiratory-tract infection and asymptomatic bacteriuria; Do not prescribe hormone therapy for preventing cardiovascular disease; prescribing precautions for NSAID, acetaminophen, benzodiazepines in older people, statins for the primary prevention of cardiovascular events in older adults, primary prevention of gastroduodenal toxicity, antiplatelet therapy after coronary artery stenting, systemic corticosteroids for acute exacerbations of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bisphosphonates if low risk of fracture, low molecular weight heparin for prevention; reduce self-monitoring of blood glucose in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus and reduce intensive glycemic control; do not prescribe treatment for asymptomatic hyperuricemia for prevention of recurrent gout; avoid prostate cancer screening; not to do annual cytology cancer screening; avoiding the imaging test for low-back pain, chronic headaches, sinusitis.

Conclusions: The published list of the semFYC’s program “Not to do” highlights tests and treatments that cannot be adequately justified on the basis of efficacy, safety, or cost. This list and the report serves as to raise awareness and change GP behaviour and those actions that GPs and patients should try to avoid.