

## W62

### **Informed choice - in whose favour?**

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**Background & Aim:** Informed patients who make decisions about their own treatment sound ethically appealing to most of us. Combining patient preferences with the best available evidence relevant to a given clinical situation is a fundamental principle of evidence-based medicine and the importance of “informed choice” is increasingly emphasized in guidelines. But, there is a risk that this approach might actually not lead to a greater respect for the individual patient’s autonomy. In an era with a strong cultural belief that more is better when it comes to medicine, patient preferences are heavily influenced by cultural perceptions with great impact from strong market forces. Additionally, available evidence and doctor’s preferences often governs which decisions are to be made in the first place, especially so in preventive medicine. A focus on providing information to enable informed choices might consolidate a biomedical framework for the interpretation of the patient’s symptoms and divert attention from other potential underlying causes. Our good intentions may inadvertently enhance medicalization.

**Method:** Some limits and potential downsides of relying on informed choice to solve ethical dilemmas within general practice and in a screening context will be introduced through three short presentations, providing common clinical practice scenarios that GPs can easily relate to. Workshop participants will discuss in smaller groups different aspects of the role of informed choice in their practice, pros and cons, cultural and national differences. Each group will then present their findings for the other participants for further discussion.

**Results:** The aim of the workshop is for participants to discuss and identify the limits and pitfalls of relying on “informed choice” to solve ethical dilemmas associated with “too much medicine” in general practice.