

# The Do No Harm Project

Colleagues:

Thank you for your interest in the Do No Harm Project. Here are the basic instructions to get started.

Send [**local champion**] a brief description about the case you would like to write up within the first week of [**rotation**]. This is required to get the writing day away from clinical duties this month. It will also give me the chance to make sure your case is appropriate. Do this by emailing me at: **email address**. Before you write up your case, have a look at vignettes your colleagues have submitted to get a sense of what we are looking for. You are encouraged to involve an attending in your case though this is not mandatory. You must submit your first draft to [**local champion**] by the end of your writing day. Follow the format specified below.

## Vignette Format

**Authors:** 3 or fewer. The first author must be a trainee (professional student, intern, resident, fellow, masters or doctoral student, or post-doctoral student).

**Format:** Suggested 600 and not more than 800 words, including a clinical vignette headed “Story from the Front Lines” (an engaging story with enough clinical information for readers to understand the clinical issues) and a summary of the clinical issues headed “Teachable Moment” (a succinct summary of the clinical issues, stating the evidence for over-testing or over treatment and suggesting an alternative approach).

**References:** 5 or fewer.

There are many incentives to participate in this initiative. Full details can be found at the Do No Harm Project website:

[www.medschool.ucdenver.edu/gim/donoharmproject](http://www.medschool.ucdenver.edu/gim/donoharmproject)

## **Summary:**

1. This initiative highlights clinical vignettes written by trainees describing harm caused by clinicians doing too much, but activities that are commonly done and seem acceptable rather than errors or obvious malpractice. The trouble with overuse is that it harms patients without any chance of benefit and we are ethically obligated to avoid it. Recognizing examples of overuse can be difficult and we want your help pointing them out.

## **Some examples:**

- CTPE study in low risk patient with negative d-dimer and resultant incidental findings and unnecessary radiation
- Tight glycemc control in elderly patient (A1C < 7) results in hypoglycemia, fall and hospitalization
- Pre-op CXR in asymptomatic patient leads to incidental benign findings, cancellation of surgery for painful umbilical hernia

Other examples where harm can result from overuse are here: <http://www.choosingwisely.org/doctor-patient-lists/>

2. Clinical vignettes should describe 1) unnecessary care resulting in harm or harm that was narrowly avoided; or **2)** misdiagnosis of patient preferences that subsequently led to unnecessary care and harm, or harm that was narrowly avoided. These vignettes don't have to be particularly unusual cases and the harms don't always have to be extraordinary (like death), but they should be well researched and thoughtfully written.

3. There are cash prizes for the best vignettes as judged by Colorado ACP members on a quarterly basis - larger

cash prize for the best vignette of the year. All housestaff who complete a submission will receive a copy of *Overdiagnosed, Making People Sick in the Pursuit of Health*, by Dr. Gilbert Welch. All completed submissions will be posted to our website for viewing by colleagues around the country. These cases are appropriate for poster presentations and fulfill your scholarly requirement. Your peers have presented their cases at regional and national conferences in the past year. [**consider other local “hooks” to encourage participation**]

4. “Teachable Moments,” a new series in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, is an attempt to improve recognition among trainees at all levels of the harms that result from the overuse of healthcare services. This series is meant to publish vignettes by trainees about harms from overuse and was launched as a result of the Do No Harm Project. The first two cases published were by CU housestaff! Patient consent is required for publication so please keep this in mind if you are considering this opportunity. I can email you the consent form.

5. Contact me with any questions. I would be glad to help you think of a case and guide you through the process.

Best,  
[local champion]