



POEMs describe interventions that are not superior to other options, are sometimes more expensive, or place patients at increased risk of harm. To maintain a focus on research studies, POEMs about guidelines, such as those produced by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, were excluded. We also excluded 12 of the most relevant POEMs of 2015 that were discussed in a previous article<sup>6</sup>.

## POEMs and Choosing Wisely

demonstrate that epidural injections are superior to gabapentin. Given the similarities between pregabalin and gabapentin, one wonders if both drugs reduce the neuropathic pain of spinal stenosis via a placebo effect. Until we have more data on the best conservative therapies for spinal stenosis, the most reasonable option may be a trial of gabapentin, physical therapy, or both before requesting an epidural injection.

### KNEE DEGENERATIVE JOINT DISEASE

In symptomatic patients with knee degenerative joint disease, those who received platelet-rich plasma injections were no better off in terms of symptoms and function score compared with those who received hyaluronic acid.<sup>6</sup> Although the study concluded that both treatments are effective, previous studies question the benefit of hyaluronic acid injections.<sup>8</sup> Another study found that injections of methylprednisolone cannot be routinely recommended to enhance patients' ability to participate in exercise therapy.

### Cardiovascular Disease

Table 2 summarizes clinical actions to consider for the treatment of cardiovascular disease, including beta-blocker therapy, dual antiplatelet therapy, and screening for coronary artery disease in patients with diabetes mellitus.<sup>19-22</sup>

### BETA BLOCKERS AFTER MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION

Although recommended by guidelines and used as a quality indicator of hospital care, the use of beta blockers after myocardial infarction, when combined with optimal contemporary acute and chronic treatment, does not provide a further survival benefit. In a meta-analysis the early use of beta blockers reduced subsequent reinfarction and angina symptoms, but these benefits began to wane within 30 days.<sup>8</sup> Thus, in the era of statins, antiplatelet agents, and stents, beta blockers do not appear to confer a benefit beyond 30 days.

### DUAL ANTIPLATELET THERAPY AFTER DRUG-ELUTING STENTS

Among patients treated with drug-eluting stents who

studies reported associations between bridging therapy and an increased risk of bleeding and cardiovascular events. Moreover, withholding bridging therapy is not associated with an increased risk of recurrent venous thromboembolism, suggesting that bridging anticoagulation should not be routinely recommended for patients with venous thromboembolism, especially those at low risk of recurrence<sup>23</sup>.

## POEMs and Choosing Wisely

low vitamin D levels will make it easier to avoid ineffective supplementation.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** This article was cowritten by Dr. Mark Ebell, Deputy Editor for AFP and cofounder and Editor-in-Chief of Essential Evidence Plus, published by Wiley-Blackwell, Inc. Because of Dr. Ebell's dual roles and ties to Essential Evidence Plus, the article underwent peer review and editing by four of AFP's medical editors. Dr. Ebell was not involved in the editorial decision-making process.—Jay Siwek, MD, ~~Editor~~  
Family Physician

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### The Authors

ROLAND GRAD, MD, MSc, is an associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine at McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

MARK H. EBELL, MD, MS, is a professor of epidemiology in the College of Public Health at the University of Georgia in Athens.

Address correspondence to Roland Grad, MD, MSc, McGill University, 3755 Cote Sainte Catherine Rd., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3T 1E2 (e-mail: roland.grad@mcgill.ca)

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eTable A. Additional Top POEMs from 2015 Consistent with the Principles of the Choosing Wisely Campaign

| Clinical question   | Bottom-line answer   | Clinical actions to consider for Choosing Wisely   |
|---|--|--|
| Does early imaging of older adults with back pain improve outcomes? <sup>1</sup>              | Among adults 65 years or older who present to primary care clinicians for a new episode of back pain, imaging before six weeks resulted in no improved outcomes at one year, but increased overall health care costs by almost 30%.  | In older patients with new onset back pain, do not routinely order early imaging.  |
| Is acetaminophen effective for the treatment of low back pain or osteoarthritis? <sup>2</sup> | Although acetaminophen was hoped to be a safer alternative to nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and opioids for the treatment of common musculoskeletal problems, on average it provides only minimal pain relief and improvement in function for patients with low back pain or osteoarthritis. Some persons may benefit with full dosages, but most will not. | In patients with low back, hip, or knee osteoarthritis pain, do not routinely tell patients to expect a clinically important effect on pain and disability from acetaminophen. |

What is the optimal medication regimen for treating adults with acute low back pain? (en-US)

eTable A. Additional Top POEMs from 2015 Consistent with the Principles of the Choosing Wisely Campaign (continued)

| Clinical question   | Bottom-line answer  | Clinical actions to consider for Choosing Wisely  |
|---|---|---|
| Does exercise training, vitamin D, or the combination of both decrease the number of falls in older women? <sup>249</sup> | Group exercise sessions twice a week for the first year and once a week for the second year did not decrease the number of falls among older women, but they halved the likelihood of a fall resulting in an injury. Vitamin D was ineffective. | In typical community-dwelling women younger than 75 years, do not routinely prescribe vitamin D to prevent falls. |
| Are men who are invited to receive systematic prostate cancer screening better off than men who receive routine care?     |   |   |