

Dear colleagues,  
Dear friends of our institute,



One of our main aims is to help prepare General Practice teams for the tasks which will face them in the future. In this respect, a key and often underestimated role - especially when it comes to caring for the increasing number of chronically ill - will be played by doctor's assistants. As part of our PRoMPT project, doctor's assistants will be so-called case managers and hold a very responsible position. Having recruited more than 600 patients, the acceptance and the initial success of this study have been so encouraging that we plan to share the experience and the strategies we are implementing by including the information in the Curriculum for (specialist) doctor's assistants in General Practice. And what is particularly pleasing: our initiative is being actively supported by the German Association of General Practitioners (both on a Federal and a State level), the German Association of Specialist Medical Professions and the Carl-Oelemann-Schule (an institution belonging to the State Medical Council in Hesse). We have included further information on this and other initiatives of ours in this issue of Short @nd Sweet.

We hope you find it interesting and informative!



Ferdinand M. Gerlach

### Curriculum – “Case Management in General Medical Care”

In the PRoMPT study which is currently under way at our institute, 39 doctor's assistants have been trained as Case Managers. As a result of the positive feedback, the training concept has now been extended and further developed with the help of the Carl-Oelemann-Schule. The 40-hour training programme includes such topics as “Basics and Techniques of Communication”, “Understanding and Motivating Patients”, “Understanding Illness”, and “Interaction with Chronically Ill Patients”. This qualification training will probably be offered by the Carl-Oelemann-Schule from the end of this year. After participating in the course, the medical trainees will be better able to help doctors in the care of the chronically ill.

<http://www.prompt-projekt.de>

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### DEGAM Guideline Nr. 9 on Congestive Heart Failure to be published

After a development time of more than two and a half years, the completed guideline on congestive heart failure was presented at this year's Congress of DEGAM – The German Society for General and Family Practice. The Guideline follows traditional DEGAM practice and includes a laminated short version, a long version and a special patient's booklet in a cardboard slipcase. With this Guideline, however, we have broken new ground in a number of ways:



- For the first time a DEGAM Guideline was developed as part of an official project - the congestive heart failure competence network - sponsored by the BMBF Federal Ministry for Education and Research. This was the only way a Guideline which involved so much work could be produced independently of industry support.
- For the process of evidence evaluation and consensus finding, methods were employed in addition to the “DEGAM ten point plan” which are innovative both in a national and an international context.
- In the near future, it will be possible to download the complete method report from our homepage. Thus, those who are interested will have access to evidence tables, external reports, protocols of the discussions which led to consensus-finding and the results of the panel and practice tests.

A positive echo in recognition of our efforts has already been received from the experts: the German National Medical Council and the AWMF Association of the Scientific Medical Societies in Germany would like the Guideline to provide the basis for the National Medical Care Guideline on congestive heart failure.

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Reference for complete text and application modules:

[omikron publishing Verlag Düsseldorf](http://omikron-publishing-verlag-duesseldorf.de)

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### „Chronic Care“ – an update

Dealing with chronic illnesses is part of the day-to-day work of the General Practice, and as a result of the demographic changes sweeping through society, this aspect of our work is going to increase substantially in the future.

Thus it was hardly a surprise that “Chronic Care” was the main focus of a recent issue of the *ZaefQ German Journal for Evidence and Quality in Health Care*, 5/2006. In what is a fine introduction to the subject, Professor Gerlach et al. describe the complex needs of chronically ill patients and the future tasks which will face General Practices in the future. Dr. Gensichen et al. then analyse prospects for the Chronic Care model in Germany and present a check list for day-to-day work with depressive patients. M. Beyer et al. then discuss important methodological questions pertaining to the success measurement of such programmes for the chronically ill.

The DEGAM position paper “Chronic Illness” is still in the process of being developed. By presenting the General Practice perspective, the paper supports the current discussion on the medical care structures which will be necessary in the future, as well as providing colleagues with practical help in implementing the new structures.

<http://www.chronic-care.de>

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### PRoMPT Project recruits 609 patients



The trial, which began to examine the effectiveness of General Practice based case management for depressive (PRoMPT Project) patients at the beginning of 2005, has recruited 609 patients and thus reached the required target. In all, 78 Practices have agreed to participate in the study, and some of these have already completed the designated 12 month observation period and carried out the final interview. Initial feedback indicates that patients under case management show a substantial improvement in their health. Detailed results will be available in the first half of next year. The trial will be completed at the end of August 2007.

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### Medicine is an Art which approximates Science

Human beings cure and relieve illnesses and have done so for very much longer than science has existed in its current form. But nowadays, physicians can improve the art of healing through the use of scientific insight, and that is precisely the aim of evidence-based medicine (EbM).

With the well-being of the patient in mind and in accordance with his or her will, the idea behind EbM is to combine the experience and judgement of the physician with the latest data from clinical research.

First of all, the patient's problem is defined. This involves a description of the patient, the available treatment alternatives and of the desired result. Subsequently, the relevant medical information on treatment options is sought out (generally from studies). The studies are then evaluated according to their explanatory power and the treatment assessed for its effectiveness and diagnostic precision. The data which provide the best explanation are then included in the treatment plan.



In the field of EbM, knowledge dissemination and utilization, as well as research and teaching, are the tasks of the 16 members who make up the working group EbM Frankfurt (part of the Institute for General Practice). In addition, annual courses in EbM are offered, as well as an obligatory seminar for medical students.

<http://www.train-the-teacher.de>

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#### Imprint:

Institute for General Practice  
Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University  
Frankfurt am Main

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Issue: September 2006