

informedhealthonline.org
INDEPENDENT, OBJECTIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED

IQWiG - About Us

IQWiG was established by legislation as part of Germany's 2003 health reform. It is an independent, non-government and non-profit foundation that is intended to support evidence-based decision making in the German health care services. The Institute is funded through a levy on healthcare services and may also accept funding from the Federal Ministry of Health. The Institute accepts no sponsorship or advertising and does not seek grants. You can read more about the board and structure of the foundation and IQWiG at the IQWiG website (URL: <https://www.iqwig.de/about-us.21.en.html>).

IQWiG undertakes and publishes assessments of the effectiveness, quality and efficiency of health care services. It receives commissions from the Federal Joint Committee of Self-Administration of the Health Care Services (*Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss* (URL: <http://www.g-ba.de/>)) and the Federal Ministry of Health (*Bundesgesundheitsministerium* (URL: <http://www.bmg.bund.de/>)) in areas including diagnostic and therapeutic interventions, disease management programs and the assessment of clinical guidelines.

The Institute is also a scientific resource for the general public and the health care community. It is an independent publisher of evidence-based consumer health and patient information, but does not provide individual patient advice.

IQWiG undertakes projects and research work on its own initiative. The work of the Institute's staff is supplemented by external contracting of projects. The Institute began operating on 1 October 2004. The Institute has departments, including one for the production of health information for the public.

The Director of the Institute is Professor Jürgen Windeler (URL: <https://www.iqwig.de/director.1101.en.html>). He took up this post on September 1, 2010.

Gesundheitsinformation.de and Informed Health Online

The basic concept for the website "gesundheitsinformation.de" (URL: <http://www.gesundheitsinformation.de/>) was developed by the members of the department in 2005 under the direction of Hilda Bastian. On February 14, 2006 the website went online for the general public, followed by the launch of the English-language version, [informedhealthonline.com](http://www.informedhealthonline.com), in May of 2006. Hilda Bastian was editor-in-chief of the website until late March, 2011.

By publishing this bilingual website, IQWiG fulfills part of its legal mandate to educate the public in matters of health. The website addresses both (healthy) consumers, as well as patients by presenting a wide range of different topics.

In selecting topics, the editorial staff draws upon various sources: The Health Information Department may be commissioned directly by the Federal Joint Committee or the German Federal Ministry of Health to work on certain topics. The second source is the reports issued by the other departments of the institute, most of which were also commissioned by the Federal Joint Committee or the Federal Ministry of Health. In addition, the editorial staff also keep an eye on new scientific publications so that they are able to select suitable topics on health care or important diseases.

Draft versions of the texts created by the editorial staff are submitted to different advisory groups, patient representatives and IQWiG's board for comments. The texts are also tested in advance by users, and their feedback is considered in the further editing stages. Editorial authority remains with IQWiG.

The editor-in-chief of gesundheitsinformation.de is Dr. Klaus Koch (URL: <https://www.iqwig.de/head-of-department.149.en.html>). His deputy is Dr. Andreas Waltering (URL: <https://www.iqwig.de/deputy-head-of-department.840.en.html>).

Gesundheitsinformation.de is to a large extent the product of the entire institute working together. Usually, members of other departments are involved, for instance by providing medical, scientific or statistical expertise. The members of the Health Information Department have experience in communication, nursing and social sciences as well as in the field of evidence-based health care and medicine.

The Department's members are:

- Dr. Klaus Koch (Head of Department and Editor-in-Chief)
- Dr. Andreas Waltering (Deputy Head of Department)

- Roland Büchter
- Dr. Martina Ehrlich
- Bettina Eilmes

- Dennis Fechtelpeter
- Sabine Keller
- Marco Knelangen
- Heidemarie Kufner-Rausch
- Susanne Madelung
- Yamina Merabet
- Sabine Mooren
- Tina Rhodes
- Thomas Swinehart
- Martin Wegmann
- Beate Wiegard
- Beate Zschorlich
- Agnieszka Lajca (student assistant)

All of the research we use has been evaluated by our team to ensure that it meets our standards for research quality. Drafts of our information go through multiple stages of quality assurance involving patients as well as healthcare experts from Germany and around the world.

We maintain a watch for new systematic reviews to find those that might interest our readers. This process also helps us know when information on our website needs to be updated in the light of new knowledge. This will help us be sure that outdated information is removed from our website. You can read more about our scientific and editorial methods on the IQWiG website.

Consumer input

We are grateful to the consumer groups, and dozens of patients and consumer advocates who have contributed to the contents of this website in the following ways:

- Providing their views on which topics would be interesting to them
- Evaluating drafts of our information
- Contribute their personal stories to this website through personal interviews
- User-testing of the website

External expert input

We are also grateful to the research authors and content experts who have commented on draft versions of our information.

Methods

The information on this website are based on the best evidence that was available at the time of publication. Every article provides the date of publication, as well as the evidence on which the information is based.

We undertake extensive literature searches for relevant high quality evidence for the topics we publish. We rely primarily on systematic reviews of trials to answer questions on the effectiveness of treatments and other interventions. You can read more about systematic reviews and why we use them here (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.61.en.html>) .

The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG)

The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG) was established by legislation to provide evaluations of the effectiveness, quality and efficiency of healthcare services. This includes the assessment of medicines as well as the publication of health information for consumers and patients.

Evidence basis of our health information

Our information is based primarily on systematic reviews of the effects of health care. Systematic reviews are necessary to gain an objective picture of health care. In order to do this, a clear question is formulated. Researchers then find all the relevant studies that could answer this question. They then evaluate those studies.

You can find a list of the evidence and other scientific literature on which this information is based at **www.informedhealthonline.org**

Disclaimer

This information was prepared and published by the German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG). It is based on the evidence and other scientific literature available at the time of publication. The information is intended for the use of patients in Germany. It is not intended to for use to diagnose illnesses and the information is not intended to substitute for medical advice.