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INDEPENDENT, OBJECTIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED

Media Release

New on the web: Independent, updated health information for the general public

The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care challenges the language barriers in health and launches Europe's first fully bilingual evidence-based health information website for the general public.

With the results of more than 22,000 trials being published every year, no website that does not regularly update its information can be confident its information is reliable. The new website, called Informed Health Online, aims to help people stay on top of the best knowledge in health. According to the Institute's Director, Professor Peter Sawicki, "The internet is full of information, but most of it is not based on reliable research and most of it is now out-of-date."

Germany's national evidence-based healthcare institution, IQWiG, launched the English-speaking version of its website this week. Called Informed Health Online in English and Gesundheitsinformation.de in German, the website will build up into in a comprehensive source of reliable information over time. It is a lively website, including graphics, quizzes, multi-media elements, and patients' stories. According to Editor-in-Chief Hilda Bastian, "Informed Health Online turns the mountain of research evidence into easy-to-understand information the average person can use. And we let you know what patients care about as well."

The website is recommended to patients in a new book which was launched last week in London, *Testing Treatments: Better research for better healthcare*. Sir Iain Chalmers, one of the book's authors, welcomed the website to this week. He said, "I am delighted to see this important new website arrive on the internet. Informed Health Online is sure to play an important role in keeping people up-to-date with what is known to work in health care, and where uncertainty still exists."

"Hundreds of thousands of patients are participating in trials in health care so that we can all be better informed by the results of these fair tests. IQWiG is to be congratulated for taking this historic step in making the results of this knowledge accessible to such a wide public, and for helping to break down the language barriers in access to knowledge."

Professor Sawicki said, "Well-informed patients are essential for good healthcare. Informed Health Online

offers patients an independent, high quality source of information they can trust."

<http://www.informedhealthonline.org> (URL:
<http://www.informedhealthonline.org>)

Background and further information:

IQWiG was established under legislation as part of Germany's healthcare reform. The website is part of the role given to IQWiG by 's parliament. The Institute's role is to evaluate evidence and provide advice to Germany's healthcare system and the general public.

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Glossary

evidence

Evidence is what we call scientific proof from well-conducted, good-quality scientific trials that have been carefully designed to answer specific questions. Depending on the types of questions, different scientific research methods (types of study) are most appropriate to find reliable answers to these questions. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs), for example, are the best way to get reliable evidence on the effectiveness of medical treatments (interventions). This type of study, however, is not the best form of evidence for all possible questions, and does not provide the best answers to all kinds of questions, either. Epidemiological studies, for example, are very suitable for establishing well-founded proof for the spreading of a disease in the population.

Sources

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**](http://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.