

An Introduction to Overdiagnosis

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Hosted by: Preventing Overdiagnosis Early Career Researcher Group (Arnav Agarwal, Brooke Nickel, Chloe de Grood, Frederik Martiny, Jennifer Yammamoto, Jolyn Hersch, Julian Treadwell, Keltie Hamilton, Kristen Pickles, Leshia Hansen, Matthew Wang, Patrick McLane, Pedro Kikushima, Wynne Norton)

Description:

Do you feel tired in the morning? You might suffer from low testosterone syndrome.

Is your child very active? It could be ADHD.

We've found a cyst on the liver – it might be serious and needs more investigation – cancer screening might save your life!

Early treatment of your pre-diabetes is essential to avoid complications.

Some based on evidence and others less so, all these claims run a high risk of overdiagnosis and unnecessary harm.

Overdiagnosis is an under-appreciated concept in mainstream medicine, despite a well-established body of research to support its presence and related downstream harms. Understanding the principles of overdiagnosis and medical excess is essential for early career researchers and clinicians in informing academic and clinical practices.

Find out more by joining this introductory seminar in October 2021 as part of the Preventing Overdiagnosis 2021/22 virtual programme.

Hosted by the Early Career Researcher Group within the Preventing Overdiagnosis network, we aim to give a broad introduction to five foundational concepts in overdiagnosis:

1. Definitions of overdiagnosis – what it is and what it isn't.
2. Drivers of overdiagnosis
3. Expanding disease definitions, indication creep and overtreatment
4. Overdiagnosis in cancer screening programmes
5. Solutions to overdiagnosis and medical excess

The session will involve presentations from a number of early career researchers, and will be 1.5 hours in duration.

Learning objectives: At the end of this presentation, attendees will be able to:

- 1) Define the concept of overdiagnosis. Identify the scope of the problem of overdiagnosis in medical practice, and identify conditions across the spectrum of medicine where overdiagnosis is prevalent.
- 2) Identify common drivers of overdiagnosis and medical excess.
- 3) Recognize the concepts of expanding disease definitions, medicalization and indication creep.
- 4) Recognize how overdiagnosis and overtreatment may be associated with unintended harm for patients.
- 5) Develop strategies to communicate the potential harm of interventions at risk of driving overdiagnosis, while balancing potential benefits.
- 6) Identify potential solutions to addressing overdiagnosis at individual and system levels.