Litigation claims
Defensive medicine
Safety risk from unnecessary examinations

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Medicine – Challenge to Safety

- Hazardous, complex industry
- Professional fragmentation
- Tradition of individualism
- Individual, professional autonomy
- Hierarchical authority structure
- Diffuse accountability
- Resistance to change
- Fear of malpractice liability
- Lack of leadership at the top level
Defensive medicine

• Unnecessary lab and RTG tests
• Unnecessary referrals to specialists
• Unnecessary hospitalizations
• Unneeded medications (antibiotics)
Defensive medicine

• Unnecessary lab and RTG tests
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• Unnecessary hospitalizations
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• Avoidance of high-risk procedures
• Avoidance of high-risk patients
“Off hand, I'd say you're suffering from an arrow through your head, but just to play it safe, I'm ordering a bunch of tests.”
Table 1. Estimated cost of selected defensive acts reported by Massachusetts physicians in eight specialty areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test/</th>
<th>% Defensive</th>
<th>Total # Tests/</th>
<th>Weighted Ave. Cost(^2)</th>
<th>Total Cost of Defensive Practices (= A * B * C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xrays</td>
<td>23.50%</td>
<td>5,930,260</td>
<td>$25.60</td>
<td>$35,676,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT scans</td>
<td>30.70%</td>
<td>1,704,087</td>
<td>$90.83</td>
<td>$47,518,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRI</td>
<td>26.70%</td>
<td>1,111,237</td>
<td>$252.58</td>
<td>$74,940,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrasound</td>
<td>23.90%</td>
<td>2,037,964</td>
<td>$45.23</td>
<td>$22,030,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals</td>
<td>27.00%</td>
<td>3,431,910</td>
<td>$67.15</td>
<td>$62,222,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab tests</td>
<td>21.20%</td>
<td>19,866,746</td>
<td>$9.15</td>
<td>$38,537,514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

= $280,925,220
Caesarean sections per 1000 live births, 2013 or l.a.
(WHO HfA September 2015)
Caesarean section rates in Italy by province, age-standardised, per 1000 women (2011).
Health Care Quality Threats

- Overuse (receiving treatment of no value)
- Underuse (failing to receive needed treatment)
- Misuse (errors and defects in treatment)
Vast of resources

Health risk

Long waiting lists
Defensive medicine

Clinical guidelines

Algorithms