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"Wheat and chaff"

The available amount of **information** in medicine is **increasing exponentially**. Suitable strategies are necessary to separate the "wheat from the chaff" and subsequently transfer relevant knowledge into daily medical practice. Evidence based medicine (**EbM**) and clinical practice guidelines (**CPGs**) should reflect the contemporary scientific standard of knowledge.

In view of these challenges the knowledge network of the medical faculty of the University Witten/Herdecke is focusing on two different tasks:

1. It provides **evidence based medical guidelines** in a format that is meant for easy access and use in daily practice.
2. It scientifically explores different ways of presenting and transferring evidence based guidelines in order to develop better and easier ways of **implementation**.

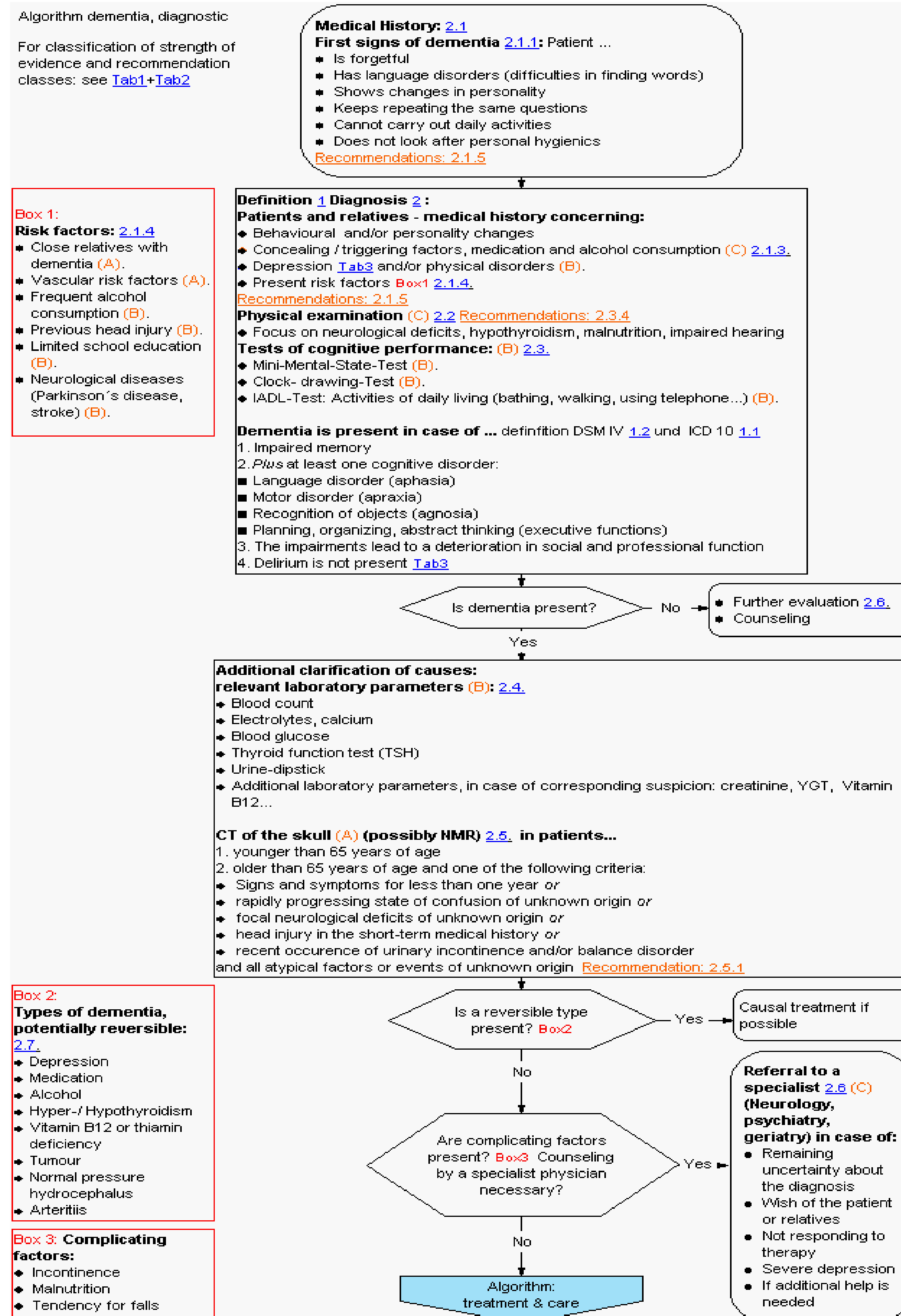


figure 1: algorithm dementia

Methods

Additional incentives, as e.g. **CME-Tools**, are necessary to succeed in implementing relevant knowledge or clinical practice guidelines respectively. The main goal of this concept is to create a learning environment for the complex process of medical knowledge transfer. The medical knowledge network evidence.de of Witten/Herdecke University publishes **evidence-based guidelines** for German physicians, with a special focus on primary care (www.evidence.de). To support the implementation process of these guidelines, the knowledge network has developed an **internet platform** for CME. A content management system (**CMS**) facilitates the easy input of different multiple choice questions. One MC-block consists of 10 questions and refers to one of the knowledge network's clinical practice guidelines (www.medizinerwissen.de).

Existing clinical practice guidelines allowed a swift development of questions concerning each medical indication. All questions were evaluated by an **editorial group of physicians** consisting of General Practitioners (GPs) and internists and consecutive usability-test with 10 faculty affiliated GPs. Suggestions offered by the users were implemented in an updated version.

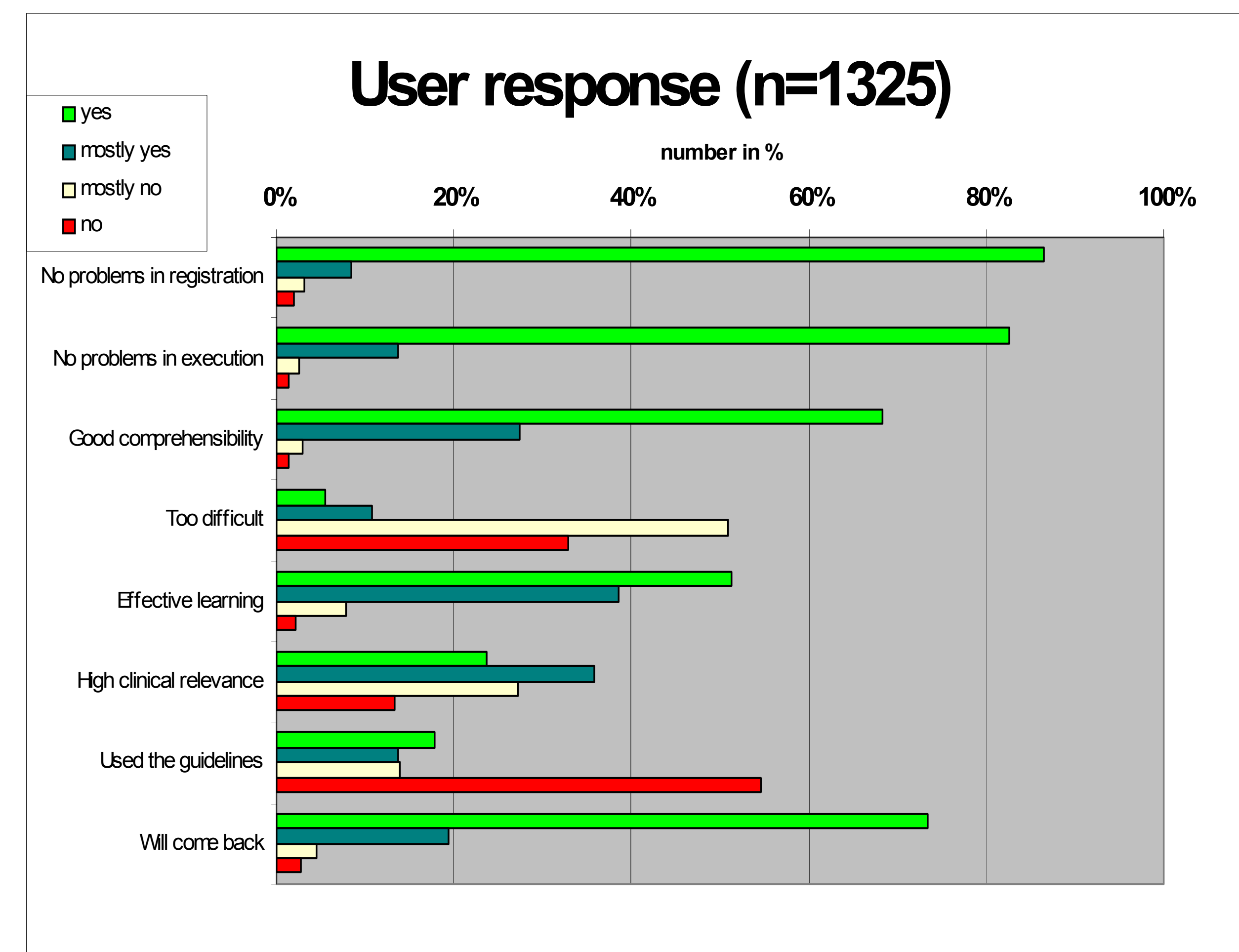


figure 2: user response (n=1325)

Web-Addresses:

Knowledge Network: www.evidence.de

For CME: www.medizinerwissen.de

Guidelines for physicians: www.medizinerleitlinien.de

Guidelines for patients: www.patientenleitlinien.de

Witten/Herdecke University: www.uni-wh.de

Feedback and further questions

In one year more than **1300 physicians** used the platform. 80% of them gave a positive feedback in an online evaluation questionnaire (figure 2). A standardized feedback allows interindividual comparisons with a selected peer group (e.g. GPs, figure 3).

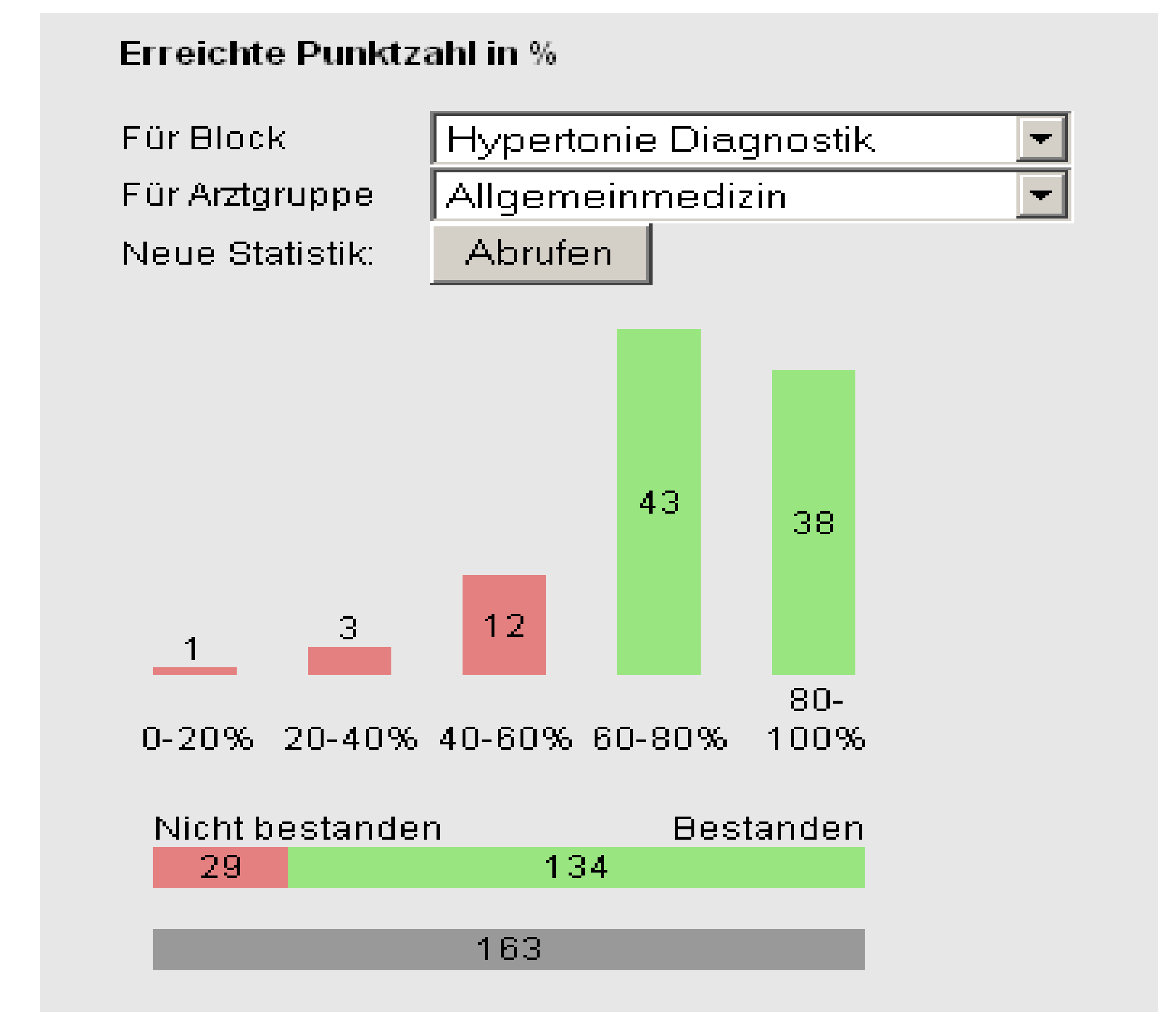


figure 3: results of a hypertension module (only GPs)

An online platform for CME can support **active learning** and may establish an **additional stimulus** to absorb knowledge relevant for medical practice. Initial evaluations of a web-based CME-platform as an additional incentive for guideline implementation are encouraging. Whether a relevant and sustainable knowledge transfer and subsequent quality improvements in daily practice will follow, is subject to an ongoing study.

In the future, the medical knowledge network will focus on the following questions:

- Do online platforms for further education facilitate and accelerate **knowledge transfer** to physicians?
- Would modified versions of such learning platforms be suitable for **patients** as well?
- Can a CME platform support existing disease management programs (**DMPs**)?

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