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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 Witten/Herdecke University 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 guideline presentation and knowledge transfer.

Additional incentives, as e.g. **CME-Tools** (CME is mandatory in Germany since January 2004), may facilitate the implementation of relevant knowledge or clinical practice guidelines respectively. Thus, the knowledge network has developed an **internet platform** for CME. A content management system (**CMS**) provides easy input of learning modules and subsequent multiple choice questions. One learning-module consists of ten questions and refers to one of the knowledge network's clinical practice guidelines (www.medizinerwissen.de).

Web-Adresses:

Knowledge Network: www.evidence.de
 For CME: www.leitlinien-wissen.de and www.medizinerwissen.de
 Witten/Herdecke University: www.uni-wh.de
 Agency for Quality in Medicine (AQUMED): www.aezq.de
 German Medical Association (GMA): www.bundesaerztekammer.de

Evaluation and Feedback

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-tests with ten faculty affiliated GPs. Suggestions offered by the users were implemented in an updated version.

In one year more than **1800 physicians** used the platform. 80% of them gave a positive feedback in an online evaluation questionnaire (figure 1).

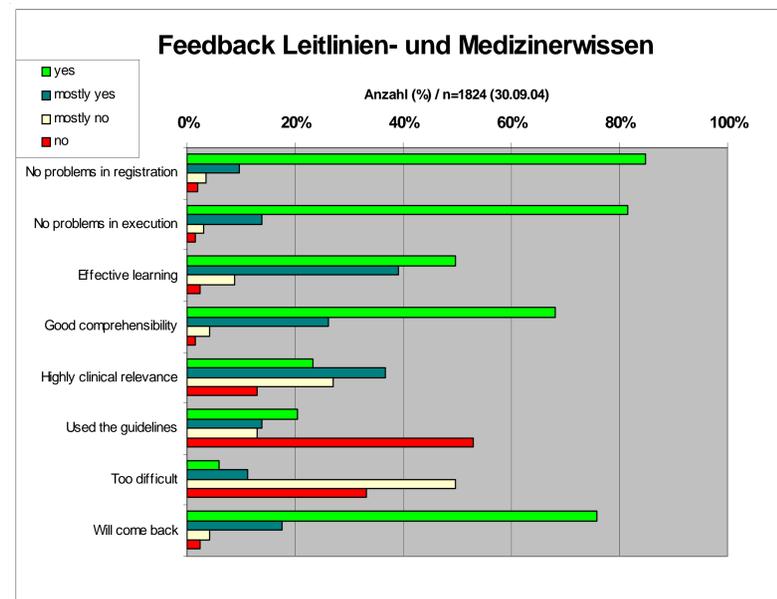


figure 1: user response (n=1824)

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Next steps and further questions

An online platform for CME can support **active learning** and may serve 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 2005 the knowlege network of Witten/Herdecke University will concentrate on **problem-based learning**. In **co-operation** with the **Agency for Quality in Medicine** (AQUMED) and the **German Medical Association** (GMA) virtual interactive cases are offered as a „second learning path“ for guideline-based training. The focus of this co-operation is to strengthen the transfer of web-based National Disease Management Guidelines (NDMGs) (figure 2).



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The screenshot shows the homepage of www.leitlinien-wissen.de. It features a navigation menu on the left with links for 'Versorgungsleitlinien', 'Leitlinien-Wissen', 'Häufige Fragen (FAQs)', and 'Neuanmeldung'. The main content area includes a welcome message from the 'Ärztliches Zentrum für Qualität in der Medizin (ÄZQ)' and 'Kassenärztlicher Bundesvereinigung (KBV)'. It highlights the 'Medizinisches Wissensnetzwerk evidence.de' and promotes 'Leitlinien- und evidenzbasierte Online-CME, die Spaß macht und Punkte bringt'. There is a registration form with fields for 'Benutzername' and 'Kennwort', and an 'Anmelden' button. A sidebar on the right lists 'Neuigkeiten' and 'Neuer Benutzer'.

figure 2: www.leitlinien-wissen.de

Three **research themes** are set for the year **2005**:

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