

Tests, treatments and procedures at risk of inappropriateness in Italy
that Health Professionals and Patients should talk about.

**Five Recommendations from the International Society of Doctors for the Environment –
ISDE Italian section**

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| 1 | <p>Air: don't consume energy derived from fossil fuels (coal, petrol, gas). When possible, use renewable energy sources; these can be provided by solar power, photovoltaic systems, wind power, geothermic sources and buildings constructed using materials which save energy. The use of private cars should be reduced preferring the use of bicycles, public transport, car pooling and walking.</p> |
| | <p>Air pollution is the main cause of many respiratory illnesses, such as bronchial asthma, cardiovascular diseases and cancer. The principal source of air pollution are industry, domestic heating and transport vehicles such as cars, planes etc. It is responsibility of the medical doctor to direct the patient to a more healthy lifestyle as described above.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Water: don't drink bottled water, choosing, if possible, water from the tap which often has better organoleptic characteristics and is submitted to rigorous quality control.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Biodiversity: Antibiotics: only when indispensable! For common respiratory infections (colds, rhinosinusitis, cough/bronchitis, flu syndromes) and bacteria in the urine without symptoms, do not prescribe antibiotics, because generally they are useless, and expose patient and family to risks, both present and future. The rule is to avoid them, leaving to doctors' autonomy the assessment of any exceptions.</p> <p>Microorganisms are essential in the ecosystem: the symbiosis between saprophytic germs and our organism is always important, and in particular in the early years of development. Few germs are pathogenic: most of them make us live and grow in health. The above infections are mainly from viruses, against which antibiotics (AB) are useless. Even when caused by bacteria, the prognosis is usually good and AB are not needed. Doctors must discourage self-administration, and kindly resist to pressures to prescribe them, showing the results of the scientific literature.</p> <p>A possible alternative is the deferred prescription, to be limited to patients trained to use it only in case of exacerbation. Once an AB cycle has started, if there is a clear improvement, patients should talk to their doctors, who may decide whether to anticipate the interruption. The improper use of antibiotics, as well as ineffective and with long-term adverse effects, causes antibiotic resistance, able to persist and be transmitted to family members, with serious risks in fragile individuals and during pregnancy.</p> <p>In Europe, Italy has the highest consumption of overall antimicrobials (humans + animals) in mg per biomass. 30% of consumption is for human use, on which the doctor has a direct impact, 70% for animal husbandry, on intensive farms. Doctors should advise on the reduction of meat consumption, in the interest of health and the ecosystem.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Ionizing Radiation: X-rays should not be carried out unless a specific clinical indication.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Nutrition: Limit foods of animal origin and industrial production. Give preference to fruits, vegetables, whole cereals and legumes, better if fresh, from your local area, seasonal and cultivated in a biological way.</p> <p>The food must be healthy, varied and moderate, following the general guidelines of the so-called "Food Pyramid", which involves less use of natural resources and less pollution ("Ecological Footprint"). A vegetarian change would not only reduce the overall mortality of 6-10%, but would be able to act on climate change with a decrease of 25% of CO₂. The citizen, as a responsible consumer, must be aware of the fact that the agro-food supply chain, in all its phases, from production to distribution to consumption, is responsible for important consequences also at the social level (from food sophistication to exploitation of laborers, from intensive monocultures to drought in large areas of our planet).</p> |

How this list was created

A restricted working group, appointed by the Executive Committee of ISDE-Italian, drafted a proposal for 9 at risk of inappropriate practices: into account the special nature and purpose of institutional ISDE, some have turned to the role of the doctor, other for citizens. After extensive discussion were selected 5 Practices at risk of appropriateness, which, even after consultation and suggestions of the responsible of the project "Doing more does not mean do better", have been definitively approved by the National Executive Board of Italy section of ISDE. Recommendations 3 and 5 were revised in October 2018.

Sources

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Slow Medicine, an Italian movement of health professionals, patients and citizens promoting a Measured, Respectful and Equitable Medicine, launched the campaign "Doing more does not mean doing better- Choosing Wisely Italy" in Italy at the end of 2012, similar to Choosing Wisely in the USA. The campaign aims to help physicians, other health professionals, patients and citizens engage in conversations about tests, treatments and procedures at risk of inappropriateness in Italy, for informed and shared choices. The campaign is part of the Choosing Wisely International movement. Partners of the campaign are the National Federation of Medical Doctors' and Dentists' Orders (FNOMCeO), that of Registered Nurses' Orders (FNOPI), the Academy of Nursing Sciences (ASI), National Union of Radiologists (SNR), Tuscany regional health agency, PartecipaSalute, Altroconsumo, the Federation for Social Services and Healthcare of Aut. Prov. of Bolzano, Zadig. www.choosingwiselyitaly.org; www.slowmedicine.it

ISDE (International Society of Doctors for the Environment) is an international association: its members, not only medical doctors, intend to defend the environment and protect the health, in the belief that environment-health is inseparable. The main activities of ISDE include: information, training, health education, lobbying towards decision makers, advocacy of citizens' requests, policy directives and Good Practices. The Italian section, ISDE-Italy, has national headquarters in Arezzo. For more details: www.isde.org; www.isde.it