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Erik Rifkin, Andrew Lazris

Interpreting Health Benefits and Risks

A Practical Guide to Facilitate Doctor-Patient Communication

- Provides physicians with an innovative tool designed to facilitate doctor /patient communication: the Risk Characterization Theater
- Includes tables and charts designed to compare absolute risks from day-to-day activities (e.g., driving, SCUBA diving) to absolute risks and benefits from medical intervention
- Adds an important and unique dimension to existing efforts to increase meaningful patient-centered care

This timely guide to communication in patient-centered medicine argues for greater clarity in explaining health risks versus benefits of an array of screening tests, procedures, and drug regimens. It reviews the growing trend toward patients' involvement in their own care, particularly in terms of chronic conditions, and details approaches physicians can use to prepare patients (and themselves) for collaborative decision-making based on informed choices and clear, meaningful knowledge. Chapters apply this lens to a wide range of common interventions as contentious as estrogen replacement therapy and antibiotics, and as widely prescribed as the daily aspirin and the annual physical. With this goal in mind, the authors also introduce an innovative decision-making tool that translates risks and benefits into a clear graphic format for fewer chances of miscommunication or misunderstanding. Among the topics covered: Involving the patient in decision making. Towards a universal decision aid. BRCT: the Benefit/Risk Characterization Theater. Breast Cancer Screening—Mammograms. Prostate Cancer Screening. Colon cancer screening with colonoscopy. Screening for and treating dementia. Statins, cholesterol, and coronary heart disease. Physicians in family and internal medicine will find *Interpreting Health Benefits and Risks: A Practical Guide to Facilitate Doctor- Patient Communication* a valuable resource for communicating with patients and new possibilities for working toward their better health and health education. This book considers several common and important situations where faulty decision-making makes overtreatment a serious risk.

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