

-----VA Technology Watch----- June 2000-----

## Health Care Notes from the VA Technology Assessment Program

This NEW periodic e-mail presents current notes on a range of evidence-based assessments, systematic reviews, and reports on therapies and other interventions relevant to VA populations. Please forward it to anyone you know who might be interested. -----

VA TAP Reports: This month we attach links to three of our NEW VA TAP Short Report Series. Network Directors, Clinical Managers, or Senior VA managers requested these short reports:

1. Short Report on Optical Lens Fabrication Systems.  
[http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/ta\\_short\\_2\\_00.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/ta_short_2_00.pdf)
2. Short Report on Tablet Splitting  
[http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/ta\\_short\\_5\\_00.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/ta_short_5_00.pdf)
3. Short Report on Computerized Lower Limb Prostheses.  
[http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/ta\\_short\\_3\\_00.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/ta_short_3_00.pdf)

The TAP has produced several longer reports on current topics. The comprehensive systematic reviews below can inform you on what the research evidence shows on PACS, stents for infrarenal abdominal aortic aneurysm repair, and erectile dysfunction. These reports are on the TAP web pages: <http://www.va.gov/vatap/publications.htm>

- The promise of increased efficiency and better patient care is bringing picture archiving and communication systems into the health care spotlight.  
<http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/pacs.pdf>
- Endovascularly Placed Grafts for Infrarenal Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms <http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/stent.pdf>
- Treatment Options for Male Erectile Dysfunction. Part 1.  
[http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/PET\\_11.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/PET_11.pdf)
- Treatment Options for Male Erectile Dysfunction. Part 2.  
[http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/PET\\_11b.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/PET_11b.pdf)

### Assessment reports from other agencies:

- Canadian Coordinating Office for Technology Assessment: Drug Treatments for Alzheimer's Disease. I. A Comparative Analysis of

Clinical Trials (May 2000). [This report reviews published clinical trials that the authors judged to be methodologically sound and that provide the best evidence on the efficacy of Alzheimer's drug therapies. Included as a second part is a review of outcome measures in Alzheimer's clinical trials.]

[https://www.ccohta.ca/publications/pdf/106\\_alzheimers1\\_tr\\_e.pdf](https://www.ccohta.ca/publications/pdf/106_alzheimers1_tr_e.pdf)

- Agency for Health Research Quality, formerly the AHCPR, has pulled together an extensive information resource on medical errors. The critical issues of medical errors and patient safety garnered considerable attention over the last several weeks. The Institute of Medicine in November released a report estimating that as many as 98,000 patients die as the result of medical errors in hospitals each year. President Clinton signed an executive order inaugurating a major Federal initiative to reduce medical errors and improve patient safety in federally funded health care programs, and by example and partnership, in the private sector.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/errorsix.htm>

- NHS R&D Health Technology Assessment Programme. Geriatric rehabilitation following fractures in older people: a systematic review, 2000; 4. [This report identified and appraised the published evidence for the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of programs of care following the acute management of fractures in older people, principally on proximal femoral fracture.]

[http://www.ncchta.org/ProjectData/3\\_project\\_record\\_published.asp?PjtId=1009](http://www.ncchta.org/ProjectData/3_project_record_published.asp?PjtId=1009)

#### Web based information resources you can use:

- Users' Guides to the Medical Literature XXI. Using Electronic Health Information Resources in Evidence-Based Practice *Dereck L. Hunt, MD, MSc; Roman Jaeschke, MD, MSc; K. Ann McKibbon, MLS; for the Evidence-Based Medicine Working Group*. JAMA 2000; 283(14):1875-1879. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/283/14/1875>
- Systematic Reviews: Critical Links in the Great Chain of Evidence. [Editorial] in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 1 March 1997; 126:389-391. <http://www.acponline.org/journals/annals/01mar97/critlink.htm>

- Evidence-Based Clinical Practice: Concepts and Approaches. Edited by: John P. Geyman, Richard A. Deyo, Scott D. Ramsey, 177 pp, with illus, paper, \$35, ISBN 0-7506-7097-5, Boston, Mass, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000. A review of a new evidence-based medicine book, from a recent issue of JAMA, reviewed by Saty Satya-Murti, MD. [Scroll down to heading titled "Evidence-Based Practice"]  
<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/283/17/2306-a.pdf>

[Have a technology question? Ask the VA Technology Assessment Program to Assist](#)

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We can provide short reports synthesizing the published medical literature and other information—highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, and levels of scientific evidence supporting use of a specific technology. The short report takes about two to four weeks and is tailored to your specific needs.

Food for Thought: "The future holds the promise of continued expansion of the body of research information. . . .it also holds the parallel threat of increasingly inadequate time and resources with which to find, evaluate, and incorporate new research knowledge into everyday clinical decision making. Fortunately, mechanisms are emerging that will help us acquire the best, most compelling, and most current research evidence. Particularly promising in this regard is the use of systematic reviews."

Cynthia D. Mulrow, MD, MSc, Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital in: Systematic Reviews: Critical Links in the Great Chain of Evidence. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 1 March 1997; 126:389-391.

**Watch for the July E-mail -- We welcome your feedback!**