# De-implementation of ineffective cancer treatment strategies

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# Conventional wisdom: medicine is slow to dis-adopt

## Why American doctors keep doing expensive procedures that don't work

The proportion of medical procedures unsupported by evidence may be nearly half.

By Eric Patashnik | Dec 28, 2017, 9:10am EST

TheUpshot

PUBLIC HEALTH

Why 'Useless' Surgery Is Sti

By GINA KOLATA
AUGUST 3, 2016

Before a drug can be marketed, it has
safe and effective. Surgery, though, is
does not regulate surgical procedures

The Atlantic

## When Evidence Says No, but Doctors Say Yes

Long after research contradicts common medical practices, patients continue to demand them and physicians continue to deliver. The result is an epidemic of unnecessary and unhelpful treatments.

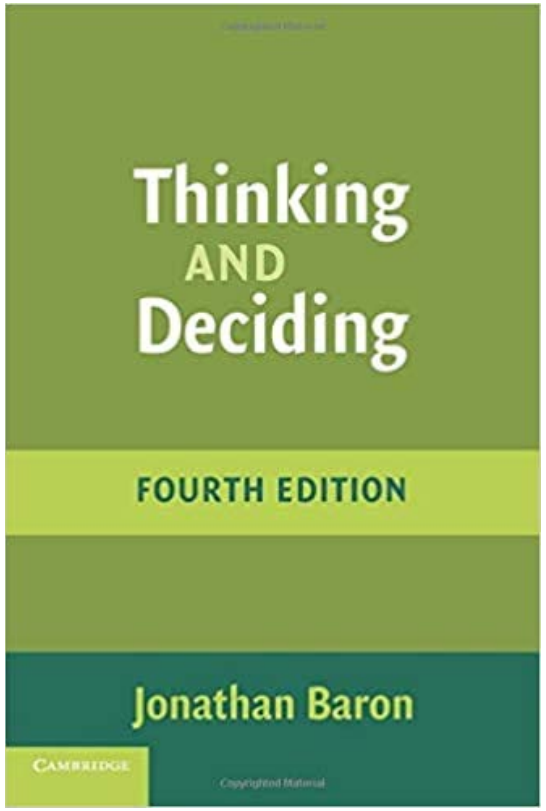
# Factors that explain reluctance to part with ineffective or harmful treatments

- Fee for service reimbursement
- Professional identify (If you have a hammer…)
- “Do more” bias
- Patient demand
- Cognitive inertia

# Cognitive inertia

Cognitive inertia (aka belief persistence) describes the human inclination to rely on familiar assumptions and exhibit a reluctance and/or inability to revise those assumptions, even when the evidence supporting them no longer exists or when other evidence would question their accuracy.

**The irrational persistence of beliefs is one of the major sources of human folly…**



# Response to cognitive inertia

As we have shown, a variety of psychological and social forces lead people toward biased positions from which they often do not move even in the face of scientific evidence.

**The answer is not to perform more trials** but to constructively overcome the psychological preconceptions that limit the value of those trials.

Ubel and Asch, Health Affairs, 2015

# The Z0011 trial

# Lymph Node Study Shakes Pillar of Breast Cancer Care

By Denise Grady

Feb. 8, 2011

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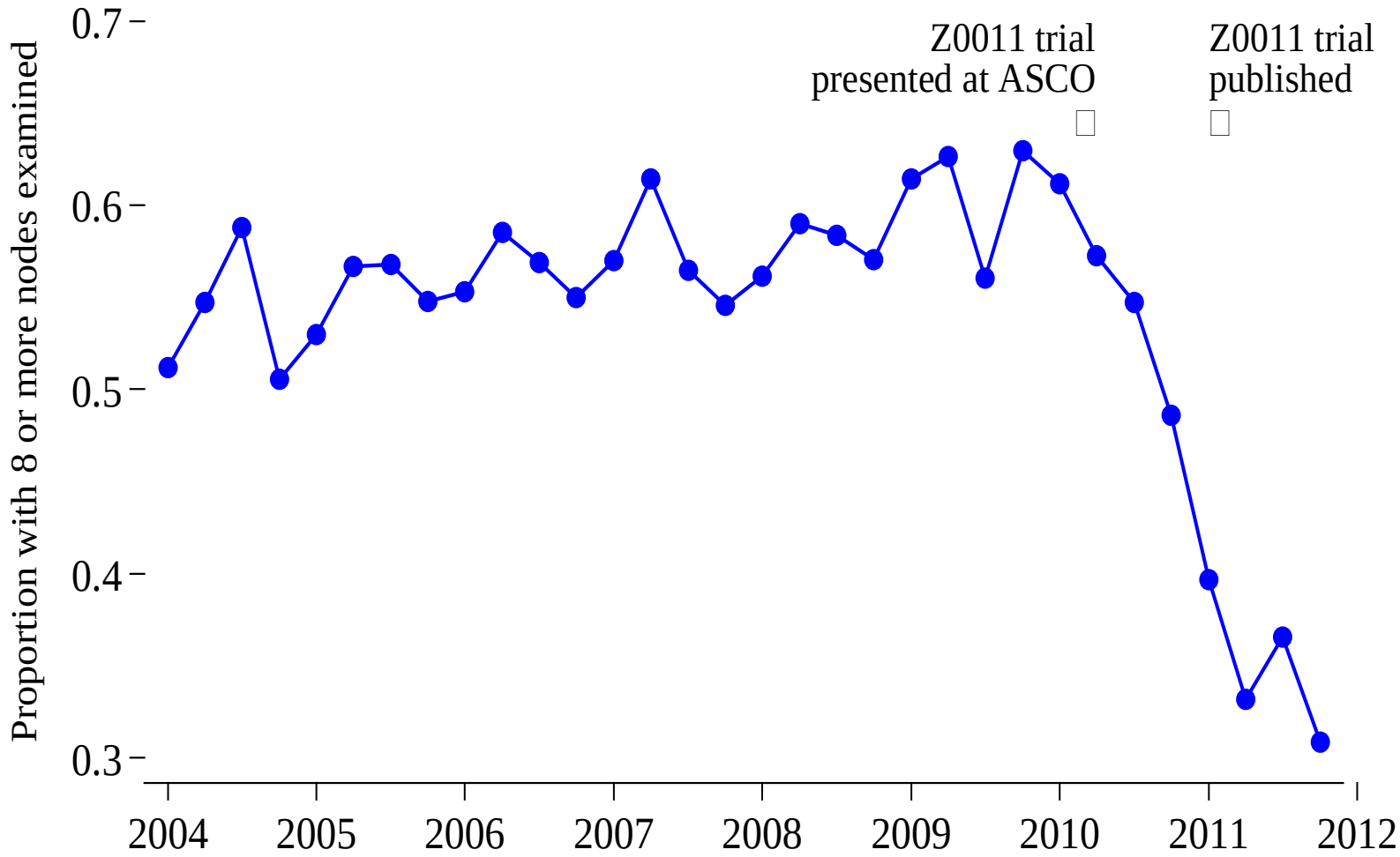
A new study finds that many women with early breast cancer do not need a painful procedure that has long been routine: removal of cancerous lymph nodes from the armpit.

The discovery turns standard medical practice on its head. Surgeons have been removing lymph nodes from under the arms of breast cancer patients for 100 years, believing it would prolong women's lives by keeping the cancer from spreading or coming back.

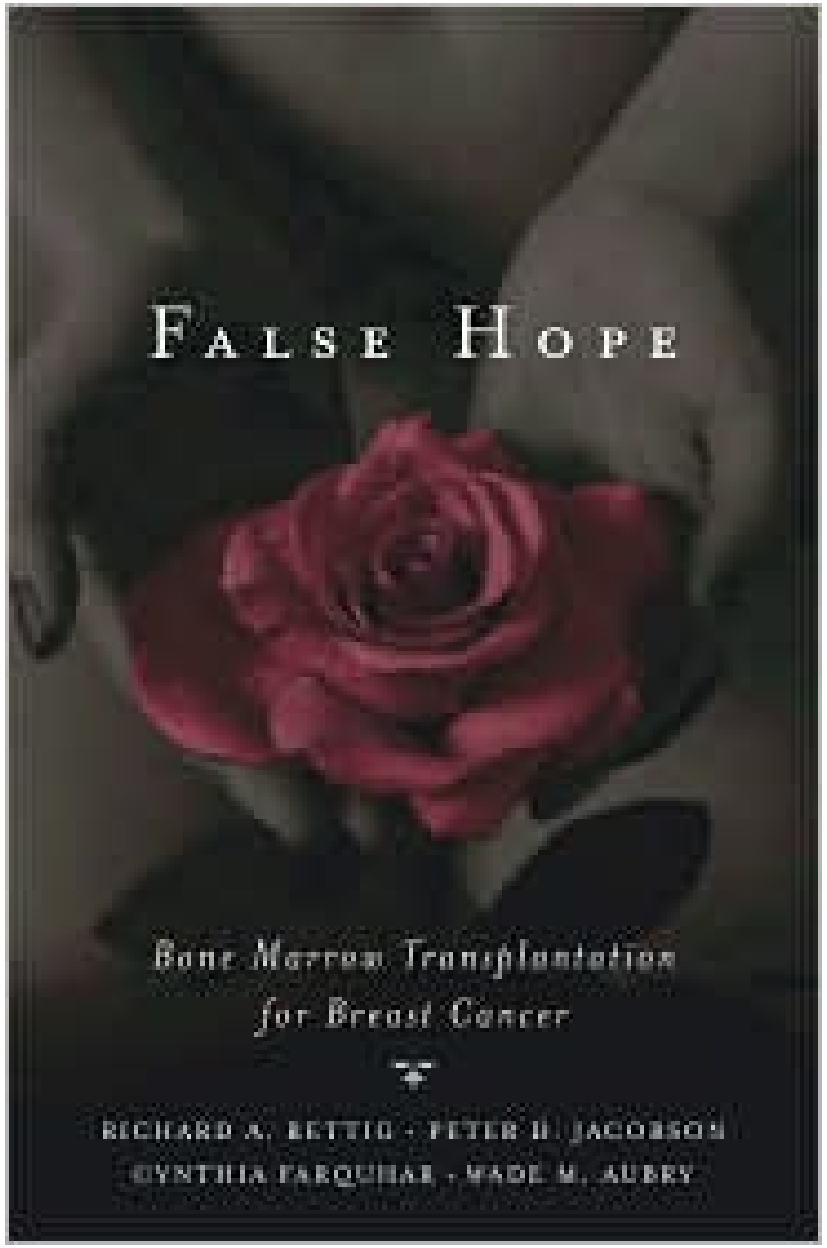
# Trends in use of axillary dissection among women undergoing breast conserving surgery



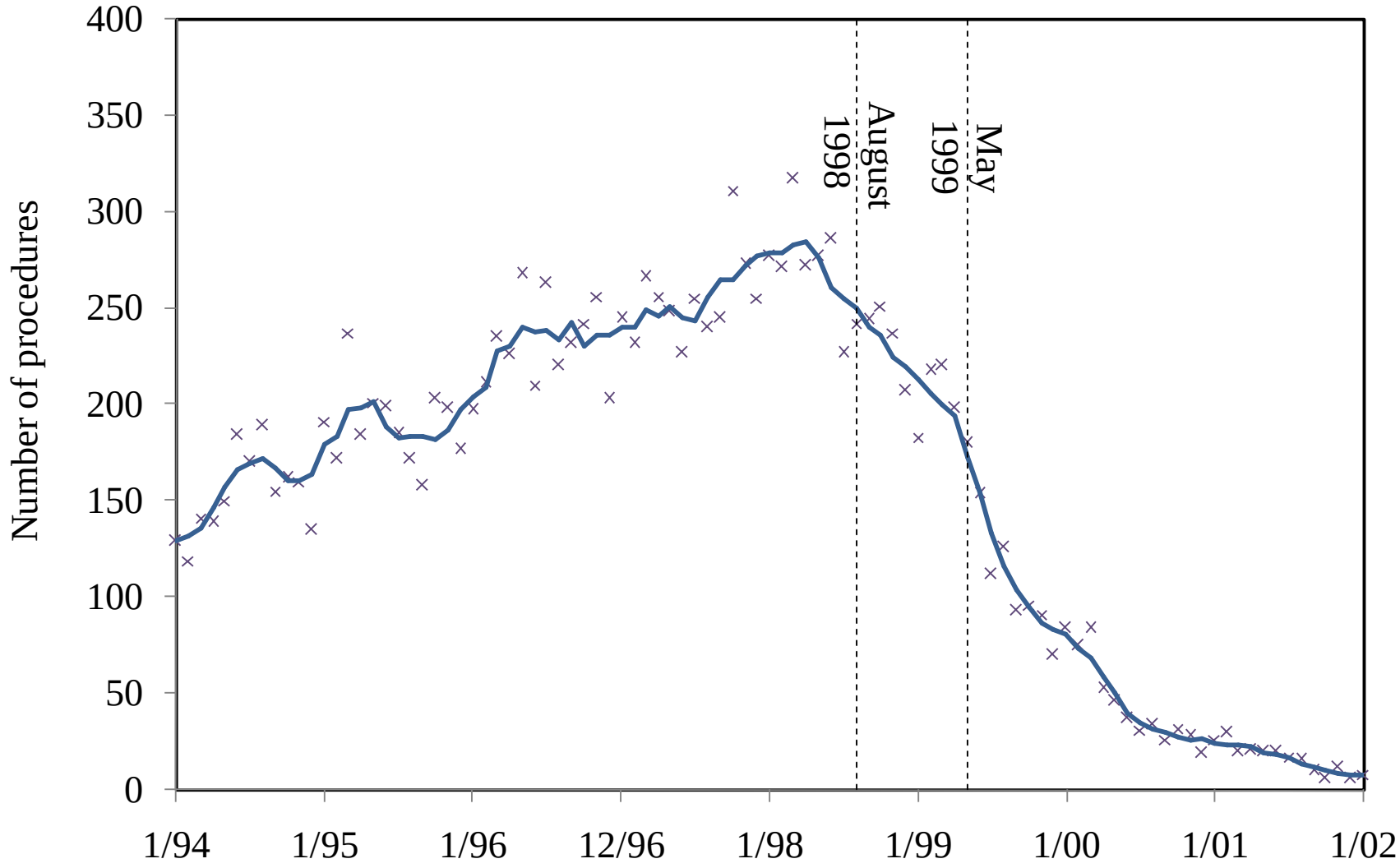

SOURCE: SEER 18 registries.

Howard DH, Soulos PR, Chagpar AB, Mougalian S, Killelea B, Gross CP. Contrary to conventional wisdom, physicians abandoned a breast cancer treatment after a trial concluded it was ineffective. *Health Affairs* 2016;35(7):1309-1315.

High dose chemotherapy/hematopoietic stem cell transplantation for breast cancer

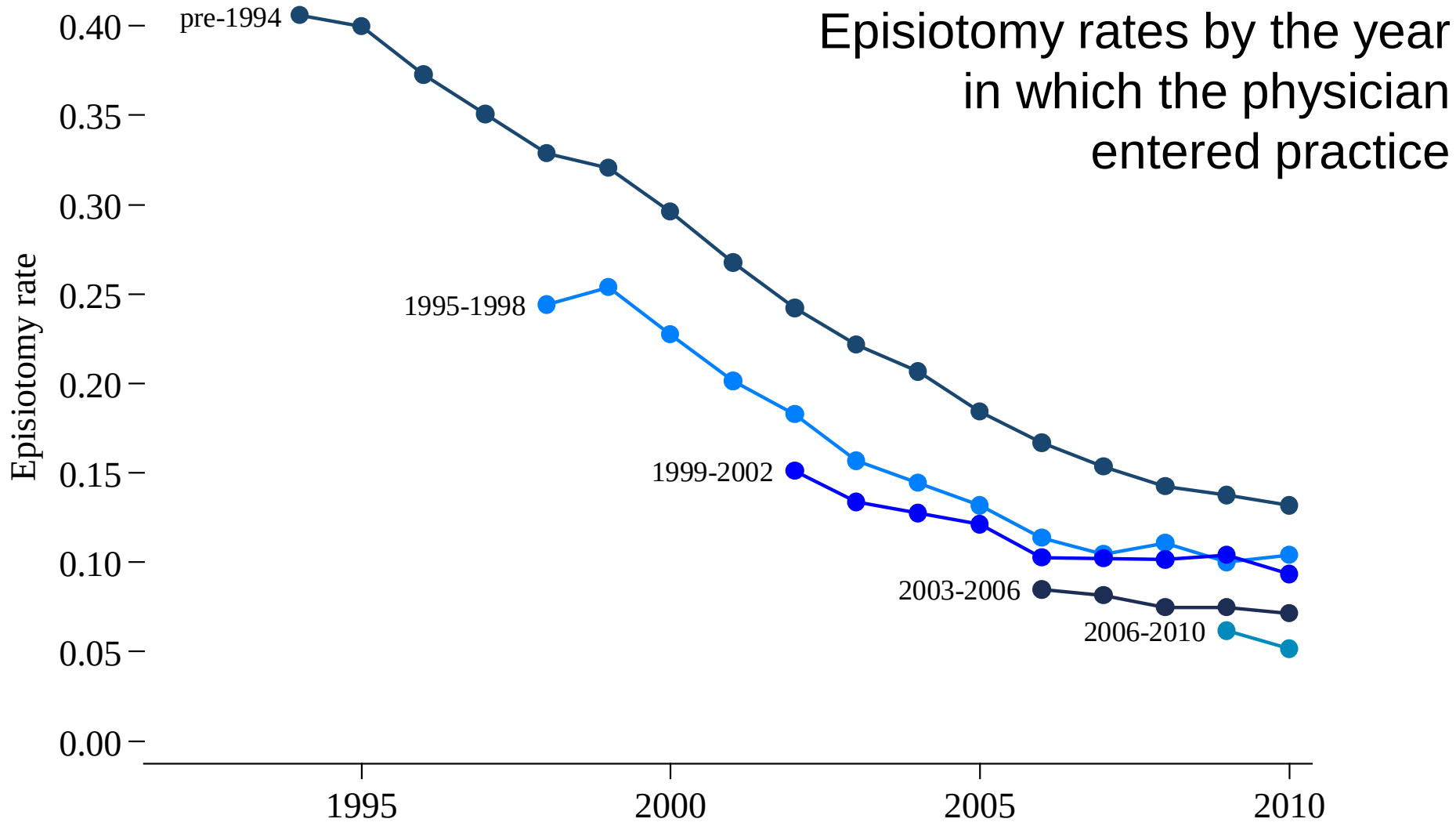


# Number of high dose chemotherapy/stem cell transplantations in breast cancer patients




Howard DH, Kenline C, Hassebroek A, Horowitz MM, Parsons SK, Rizzo JD, Majhail NS. Abandonment of high dose chemotherapy/hematopoietic cell transplants for breast cancer. *Health Services Research* 2011;46(6):1762-1777.

# Older physicians were slower to stop performing routine episiotomy

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# Policies to promote de-implementation

Alternative payment models

Misvalued code initiative (i.e., payment cuts)

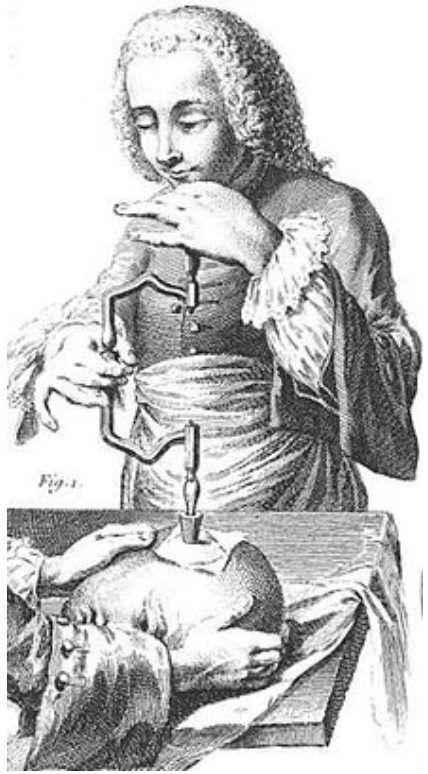
Require shared decision making

Allow prior authorization/utilization review

Aggressive False Claims Act enforcement

Education

Fund RCTs of treatments of uncertain value

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