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# Just Health Care?

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## **Medical need in Hemophilia A**

### **Introduction:**

The German Health Care system is based on the idea that the patient ought to receive everything that is “needed<sup>1</sup>” in his situation and all this “needed” treatment has according to law to be paid for by the solidary-financed health insurance. Therefore questions arise what people define as being “needed”, whether different groups (patients, doctors, nursing staff and patients' relatives) differ in their evaluation and who should define medical need.

### **Method:**

In 2003 we have done a qualitative interview study on professional experts, patients and their relatives (n=17) to analyse the different perspectives of medical need in the example of Hemophilia A.

### **Results:**

Most interviewed claimed all medical treatment is “needed” that brings the patients' life to a “normal” standard and everything that can be done should be done to improve the patients situation. The expectations of patients and their relatives are notably higher than the one of the physicians. Most interviewed wished that “medical need” should be defined by doctors and patients together.

### **Discussion:**

The results show that it is insufficient to define “medical need” if the term is supposed to limit medical services. The definition is expected to be finalised by more than one expert group and patients included. The high expectations towards the treatment show the importance of a wide public discussion about the medical budget itself and resource allocation within it and in general.

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<sup>1</sup> In German: „notwendig“