



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Allgemeinmedizin und Familienmedizin e.V.

The German Project to Develop Guidelines for General Practice: Results and Experiences

Martin Beyer, *Univ. Kiel*

Silke Brockmann, *Univ. Duesseldorf*

Ferdinand M. Gerlach, *Univ. Kiel*

and the members of the Working Party on
Guidelines for General Practice of *DEGAM*,
*the German Society for General Practice
and Family Medicine*

WONCA Europe, Amsterdam, June 4, 2004

Topics

- Project and methodology
- Current state of development
- Experiences in development
- Implementation activities, barriers
- Conclusion

Aims of the project

- Decision in 1998 to develop guidelines for general practice on ca. 20 important topics
- Publicly funded in the take-off period 1999-2002
- Mixed authoring teams (researchers, practising GPs), support by departments of GP
- The DEGAM guideline project was the first effort in Germany to develop evidence-based clinical guidelines among all medical specialties
- Ownership of guidelines in Germany important: competitive structure of ambulatory care

Methods

Ten-step schedule of development, implementation, and dissemination, including:

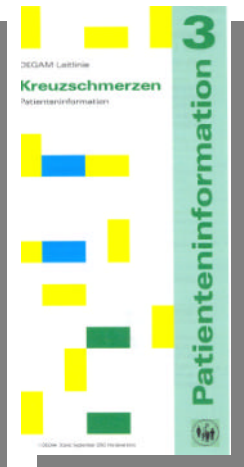
- Evidence-based drafts on complaints/health problems
- Peer-review and consensus finding within the DEGAM-Working Party (ca. 55 members, mixed)
- Implementation modules/tools for GPs, patients and practice staff
- Piloting by GP-panel review and practice testing (ca. 20 practices)
- Attempt to consent with specialist societies + consumers
- Publication in scientific journal, print and internet version

Completed guidelines (2004)

- Dysuria (UTI)
- Fatigue
- Low back pain
- Risk/prevention of falls
- Urinary incontinence (July 04)

expected in 2004/05:

- Caregiving
- Rhinosinusitis
- Earache (Otitis)
- Headache
- Stroke
- Cardiovascular prevention
- Chronic heart failure
- Sore throat
- Cough (acute, chron.)



Experiences in development

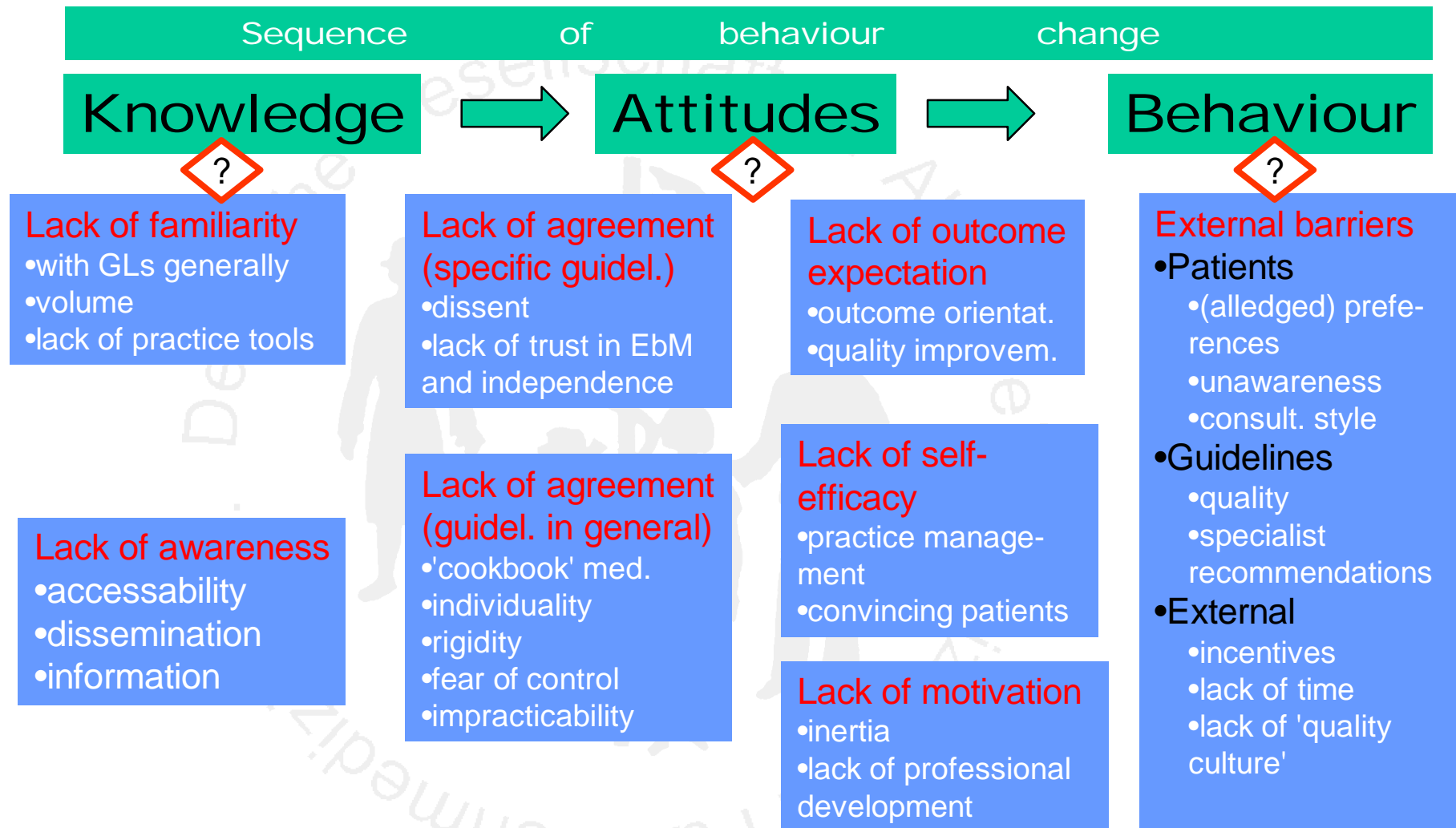
- Monodisciplinary development
- ... takes much more time than expected
 - » voluntary, (enthusiastic?) freelancing activity, personal relation
 - » limited possibility to adapt international guidelines
 - » Difficulty to find evidence for practical problems
- Support by academic departments/projects is essential
- Resources for pilot testing
- Guideline development has increased considerably the scientific potential in German GP

Difficulty of implementation

- Professional strength
 - vocational training, CME
- Guideline acceptance
 - professional information, tools
- Public awareness / patient expectations
 - Media, Info-prescription, patient letters,
- Implementation in practice
 - tools, computer, practice staff (case management)
- ... to change professional behavior
 - integration in QM-activity, PRG-work

Barriers of implementation

Experiences from implementation projects



*adapted from Cabana et al. 'Why don't physicians follow clinical practice guidelines', JAMA 1999

Conclusions

- Development and implementation of guidelines is a formative - but difficult - process in general practice
- External barriers are mostly first mentioned as an obstacle,
- ... but we know that lack of information and external barriers *re-act* in weakening a professional attitude
- It seems to be important to encourage professional attitudes and self-reliance in implementing guidelines
- In reverse: working with adequate guidelines is essential for proper (under-)standing as a GP

Thank you!



DEGAM-guidelines and additional information are accessible at:
www.degam-leitlinien.de