Please read this first:

We define a **placebo intervention** as a diagnostic or therapeutic sham intervention or as an intervention with substances or physical methods which have no direct pharmacological, biochemical or physical mechanism of action according to the current standard of knowledge. The term includes a considerable variety of interventions, thus not only the administration of lactose tablets or isotonic saline solution.

**Pure placebos** are inert substances or methods such as sugar pills or isotonic saline solution. **Impure placebos** refer to substances or methods which have a known pharmacological or physical activity but which cannot be expected to have any direct therapeutic effects for the respective disease and in the chosen dosage, e.g. vitamin infusions for cancer or peppermint pills for pharyngitis.

The questions refer to medical practice and not to clinical research.

1. **Personal**

   **Age:** _____

   **Gender:** □ Female □ Male

   How many days per week do you work in your medical office? (rounded up in half days) _____

   How many patients do you see per day? □ <16 □ 16-30 □ >30

2. Do you apply placebo interventions to your patients? 

   If yes, mark all applicable options in the box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive suggestions</th>
<th>... I have already used</th>
<th>... I have not used so far</th>
<th>... is not a placebo intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple ointments and/or bandages for contusions without visible skin damage</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>„Sugar pills“</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injections with saline solution</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapies without pharmacological or physical efficacy for the patient’s conditions (e.g. vitamins or antibiotics without approved indication)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic practices, maybe on patient’s request or to calm the patient:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• non-essential physical examinations of the patient</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• non-essential technical examinations of the patient <strong>without relevant risks</strong> (e.g. ultrasound, MRI)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• non-essential technical examinations of the patient <strong>with relevant risks</strong> (e.g. computer tomography)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (please add):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

□ I do not apply **placebo interventions** to my patients (Please go to question 7).

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1 For simplicity we did not adapt the questionnaire to include children’s care, but this is explicitly included.
3. When and why do you use placebo interventions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placebos used *</th>
<th>pure and impure placebos *</th>
<th>only impure placebos *</th>
<th>no placebos at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To conform with the requests of the patient</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain a therapeutic advantage through the placebo effect</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To still be able to offer a treatment option to a patient with an „incurable“ disease</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To offer a treatment in situations in which standard treatments may strongly burden patients with side effects or are contraindicated</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To offer a treatment to patients whose complaints and test results are not attributable to a certain disease (unspecific complaints)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To offer treatment to difficult patients with psychological peculiarities, i.e. constant unwarranted complaints</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To test whether the pain is psychogenic or organic</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To avoid drug addiction</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (please add):</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Definitions: see box on the first page

4. How often do you prescribe or administer pure placebos, e.g. sugar pills or isotonic saline solution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pure placebos</th>
<th>(please mark only the one most appropriate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximately once a week</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximately once a month</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More seldom as once a month</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If you use pure placebos therapeutically – what do you tell the patient?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I tell that … (please mark only the one most appropriate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>… this is a medication / a therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… this is a placebo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… this is a medicine with no specific effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I say nothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never give pure placebo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. If you use impure placebos therapeutically – what do you tell the patient?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I tell that … (please mark only the one most appropriate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>… this is a medication / a therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… this is a placebo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… this is a medicine with no specific effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I say nothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never give impure placebo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. The use of pure placebos in the medical practice...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I am uncertain</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... must be rejected in principle because it is ineffective.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... must be rejected in principle because it implies deceiving the patient.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... must be rejected in principle because of legal concerns.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... can be used as long as physician and patient work together in partnership.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... is acceptable for the benefit of the patient and for minimizing harm to the patient.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... is for me a traditional component of medical practice.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The use of impure placebos in the medical practice...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I am uncertain</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... must be rejected in principle because it is ineffective.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>... must be rejected in principle because it implies deceiving the patient.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... must be rejected in principle because of legal concerns.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... can be used as long as physician and patient work together in partnership.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... is acceptable for the benefit of the patient and for minimizing harm to the patient.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... is for me a traditional component of medical practice.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Do you think patients would be disappointed if they learned that they have been intentionally treated with a pure placebo?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, many of my patients</th>
<th>Yes, a few of my patients</th>
<th>Mostly no</th>
<th>I do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Do you think patients would be disappointed if they learned that they have been intentionally treated with an impure placebo?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, many of my patients</th>
<th>Yes, a few of my patients</th>
<th>Mostly no</th>
<th>I do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Training about placebo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Please mark all appropriate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... results from placebo research</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... concepts of placebo (definitions, mode of action)</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... the use of placebo in medical practice</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information about placebo during my medical studies were sufficient</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about placebo is inappropriate in medical studies</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further advanced training on the topics covered is desirable</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Do you agree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I am uncertain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placebo interventions initiate self-healing processes in the patient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The clinical effects of placebo interventions are mostly negligibly small</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost every medical intervention is accompanied by placebo effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of patients who benefit from placebos is as a rule 30-35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are certain human characteristics that make some people more responsive to placebos than others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure placebos have an effect on subjective symptoms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure placebos have an effect on both subjective symptoms and objective signs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure placebos can be used to distinguish between psychogenic or organic pain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The oral administration of pure placebos can cause relevant side effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If supposed side effects of remedies occur the tentative administration of placebos can help improve future compliance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider the „drug“ doctor important for the success of the treatment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which percentage of patients state a clinically relevant decrease of the pain after a placebo injection on the first postoperative day after an abdominal surgery? Approx. ____%

13. Have you undergone a therapy yourself that you know is not scientifically proved?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

14. In your opinion does the mentioned alternative methods of therapy predominantly base on the exploitation of placebo effects? Which of them do you use or prescribe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>... is predominantly based on exploitation of placebo effects</th>
<th>I use it or prescribe it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acupuncture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeopathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypnosis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neural therapy (therapeutic use of local anaesthetics)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteopathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiki and other forms of laying on of hands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you very much for your participation!

Dr. M. Fässler  Dr. M. Gnädinger  Prof. Dr. Dr. N. Biller-Andorno