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Editor

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To the editor:

A word of caution about over-generalization regarding over-use of health care services ["Decision Makers Differ on How to Mend Broken Health System," June 9]. There's no question that overuse exists and will be reduced by electronic health records, but—as the RAND reports that you cite clearly state—the real challenge in America is underuse, not overuse. The 2003 RAND study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found significant underuse of sound, well-established procedures, such as screening tests for colorectal, cervical, and breast cancer. RAND reported similar widespread underuse in a 2007 study on ambulatory care for children. And the seminal 2001 IOM study, *Crossing the Quality Chasm*, includes a 41-page appendix of studies showing underuse of clinically indicated medical treatments and preventive services, including Pap tests, urine cultures, cholesterol tests, prenatal screening, and diabetes tests. Given the fast-flying rhetoric in Washington that suggests simple solutions to health cost dilemma, (e.g. let's just cut the waste), we owe it to ourselves to understand what studies about health care utilization and under-utilization really say.

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