



## Keeping up with medical ‘truth’

Now it's official: by the time you retire, half of what you learned in medical school will be false or obsolete.

In a recent study from France, Poynard and colleagues<sup>1</sup> looked at research articles going back to 1945 on the topics of cirrhosis and hepatitis published in two respected journals. For each article, they asked a panel of experts to rate the conclusions as either still true, still true but obsolete, or false. Then they plotted the survival curve for “truth,” as we do for populations of patients with chronic diseases.

Truth was not immortal. The half-life of truth was 45 years, and at 50 years the mean survival was 26%.

Given the short life expectancy of medical truth, physicians have no choice but to be lifelong students. We at the *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* will do our best to keep you current on what you need to know. And that's the truth.

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### ■ REFERENCES

1. Poynard T, Munteanu M, Ratziu V, et al. Truth survival in clinical research: an evidence-based requiem? *Ann Intern Med* 2002; 136:888–895.