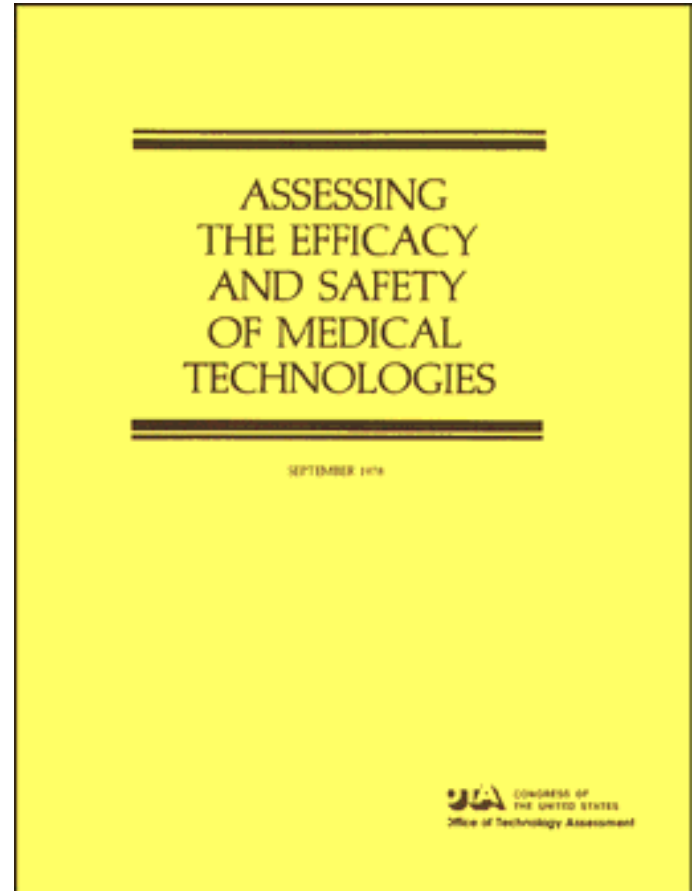


*Assessing the Efficacy and Safety of Medical
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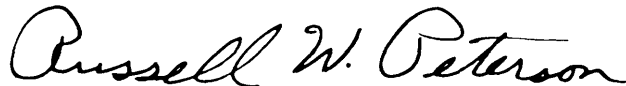
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FOREWORD

The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) was requested by the Senate Committee on Human Resources “. . .to examine current Federal policies and current medical practices to determine whether a reasonable amount of justification should be provided before costly new medical technologies and procedures are put into general use. ” This area of study was approved by the OTA Board in April of 1975.

Recognizing the range and complexity of issues relating to medical technologies and their use, the OTA Health Advisory Committee recommended dividing the subject into a series of discrete studies. The first report, *Development of Medical Technology: Opportunities for Assessment*, focused on assessment of the societal impacts of medical technologies. That report was published in August 1976. The second, *Policy Implications of the Computed Tomography (CT) Scanner*, examined the effects of public and private policies on the development, diffusion, use, and reimbursement of CT scanners. That study, published in August of 1978, was also requested by the Senate Committee on Finance. This report, *Assessing the Efficacy and Safety of Medical Technologies*, examines the importance and the current status of information on efficacy and safety as well as techniques and programs for generating that information.

The study was conducted by staff of the OTA Health Program with the assistance of an advisory panel chaired by Dr. Lester Breslow. It was reviewed by the OTA Health Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Frederick C. Robbins, and by a large number of individuals from a variety of backgrounds. The resulting report is a synthesis and does not necessarily represent the position of any individual.



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