



## Prescrire's at-a-glance drug rating system

### Our ratings on a new drug's therapeutic advantage

Since its creation 30 years ago, *Prescrire* has used a rating system to provide an at-a-glance estimate of the therapeutic progress (or lack thereof) of the new drugs and indications analysed each month. A pictogram represents *Prescrire's* mascot, nicknamed Gaspard. Gaspard's different facial expressions and body positions correspond to seven pre-defined ratings. *Prescrire's* at-a-glance rating system for new drugs and new indications is explained on the last page of the "New Products" section (this issue p 68). It also forms the basis for the yearly Drug Awards (Pilule d'Or) ceremony in January (this issue pages 79-82 and online at [www.english.prescrire.org](http://www.english.prescrire.org)). For example, "Nothing new" indicates that the product has no proven advantages over other drugs belonging to the same, plethoric pharmacological class. Many such products are simple me-toos.

### What matters is therapeutic progress

Drug regulatory agencies do not require manufacturers to prove that their new products represent a therapeutic advance before granting marketing authorisation. Yet therapeutic progress is precisely what matters to patients, and this is why *Prescrire* examines each new drug's place compared with existing options.

*Prescrire's* standardised method for assessing pharmaceuticals is a multistep process: we first examine the condition or clinical setting for which the drug is proposed; then the natural course of the disease, the efficacy and safety of existing treatments, and the most relevant outcome measures. This is followed by a systematic search for clinical data on the efficacy and adverse effects of the new drug, and an assessment of the level of evidence.

### Gaspard sums up Prescrire's review of the evidence

Based on our independent analysis of clinical data, we form a judgement as to whether or not the new drug is beneficial for patients or whether or not its harmful effects outweigh the benefit. Gaspard's demeanor informs our readers, at a glance, of the conclusion of our assessment based on extensive, painstaking work by a large multidisciplinary team. This allows patients and healthcare professionals to distinguish useful new products from those that are simply useless or, worse, downright dangerous, based on hard endpoints.

*Prescrire's* conclusions, represented in these ratings, are often in line with those of other independent teams worldwide.

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