

# How to re-read the expert's report

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The medical expert, especially the otolaryngology expert, are relied upon to advise in their special fields. The ear nose and throat expert deals in problems of hearing, tinnitus, sinus and nasal injuries. The orthopedic expert deals with questions of identifying complex musculoskeletal problems. Because often the medical expert's report is so esoteric, here are some pointers to help you evaluate these reports.

You have the expert's report. What do you check for? How do you evaluate for authenticity?

**What are his/ her degrees?** Is it a degree you are familiar with? DOM is not doctor of osteopathy. Is the PhD in engineering or natural healing? If it is in psychology from U.C. Berkeley, easy to verify.

**What is his specialty?** Is he a member of the Board of Orthopedic Olympic Reconstruction? Or Neurologic Best Evaluation? The American Board of Medical Specialists maintains a list of accepted board designations and members and these can be checked at the web site <http://www.certifieddoctor.org/verify.html> Sometimes there is a claim of being president of the American Certified Neuro Ortho Evaluators of which not only is he the president, but also the sole member.

**What are the tests that support the conclusions?** You never heard of a Neuro-Valvo Diagnosticator? Ask at the local medical school or teaching hospital. If they never heard of it either, think carefully before accepting the report, much less paying for the test. When no one else does the test, you can obtain whatever conclusions you wish. Medline won't help you here because they don't have any articles on the Neuro-Valvo or other "private" testing devices.

**If the report doesn't sound right, check the curriculum vitae.** *True story:* He listed himself on staff of a prestigious hospital. Knowing this person's poor reputation, I didn't feel he would be accepted to this staff. Turns out he wasn't on staff and had never ever been. This deception was brought out at trial. Most hospitals do a fair job of checking their staff applications so staff membership can be important.

**Articles published.** Article submitted for publication is not the same as articles published. Where were these published? Archives of Orthopedics is strictly peer reviewed. The South Bolivia Journal of Hematology may not be. Each field has its prestigious journals in engineering, materials testing, etc.

**Who did the actual testing?** In today's world, the audiogram should be performed by a state of California licensed audiologist. Otherwise the entire report may be problematic. Audiometer should be calibrated and tested. Unless this is observed, any sort of results can be obtained. Similarly in other fields there are standards of testing that must be followed. In many area where the tests are new, accepted standards of normal or abnormal may still be in debate. A useful source for this information is the Northern Light search engine at <http://standard.northernlight.com> They have lay articles on advanced subjects which are abstracted, but you can also get detailed articles.

**The name of the clinic** that submits the report. Is the name deliberately contrived to associate with another well known facility? The May Oh Brothers clinic? The Truly Blessed St John's Clinic? Sometimes this is a real clue as to when the report should be questioned.

**The duration of unchanged symptoms.** Is the pain the same two years later? Is the dizziness unchanged? Can't be the same. The body adapts to these. Question the report.

**Endless physical therapy?** Daily hot packs for 4 months? Physical therapy requires treatment plans, progress reports and home exercises. Unless these are present in writing, report need to be evaluated.

**Poor English and Grammar?** Might be a good report. Not every fine doctor is a scholar these days.

These are just suggestions about what to look for in the expert's report.

see Medical Legal Otolaryngology: <http://members.aol.com/ent16law/>

for Ear Nose and Throat information see <http://www.ent-consult.com>