

Desperation - Definition

Desperation is a state of extreme urgency, hopelessness, or lack of alternatives that drives a person or group to take risky or unproven actions.

□ In Clinical and Scientific Contexts: Desperation describes situations where medical decisions are influenced more by fear of deterioration than by evidence-based reasoning—often due to a lack of effective treatment options, progressive disease, or patient/family pressure.

△ Examples in Practice: Repeated invasive procedures with diminishing returns.

Off-label or experimental treatments without proper justification.

Acceptance of low-quality evidence as sufficient.

Emotional language replacing analytical reasoning in clinical judgment.

□ Why it's dangerous: May compromise patient safety.

Leads to overuse of interventions.

Can distort scientific communication and bias the literature (e.g., overly positive case reports).

Often goes hand in hand with unjustified optimism.

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