
Dolography

The visual communication tool
for pain therapy



Dolography supports communication between medical specialists and patients.

The use of image cards enables patients, medical specialists and other to talk about the various components of pain in a precise and differentiated manner.

Patients suffering from pain have often difficulties finding the right words to describe their sensations. Since pain therapy rests upon subjective reports by the patients, the difficulty to couch pain often impedes treatment.

Once pain is externalized with the use of a visible object, the experience of pain appears clearer and more conceivable.

Thanks to Dolography the person concerned is able to describe their pain experience in a precise and differentiated manner.

Pain becomes visible and conceivable for those who are not concerned. On one side, pain anamnesis is thereby supported and on the other side, it represents the basis for patients to feel understood and to be confident in their treatment.

«Dolography helps me a great deal in diagnostics. By means of the description of the chosen pictures clinically relevant issues can be found — which otherwise would have stayed unknown — concretized or even expressed for the first time.»

Prof. Dr. med. dent. Jens Christoph Türp, Univ. Center for Dental Medicine Basel

The Dolography images were developed by communication designers Sabine Affolter and Katja Rüfenacht. In collaboration with Dr. med. Niklaus Egloff from the University Hospital Bern, the images were tested, modified and refined in order to optimise their suitability to describe pain sensations in a therapeutic setting. The images were created and developed through an alternating process of image creation and interviewing patients.

Dolography was awarded the European Design Award 2017, the Swiss Design Award 2013/14 in the «research» category and the Bernese Design Foundation 2015/16 marketing award.

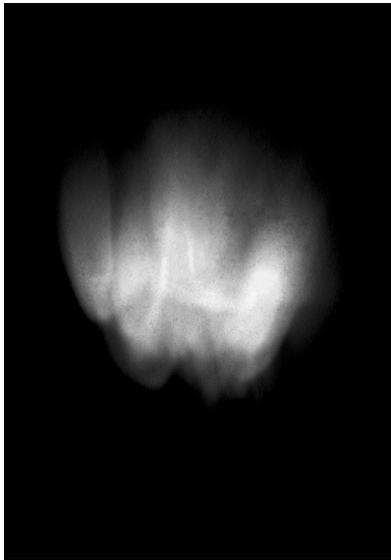
Dolography comprehends a set of 34 image cards in postcard format and comes in a handy box for 79 EUR (89 CHF), available at: www.dolography.com

Dolografie

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Reviews by chronic pain patients at the University Hospital Bern

«Without doubt: your image card set would definitely be helpful! Looking at your images makes me feel at ease, it makes me feel as if I could be understood and I could say: Yes, this is exactly how I feel like.» M. G.*



«Dull, diffuse pain below the forehead that radiates slightly upwards.» M. R.*



«This picture represents the constant restlessness in my body.» A. F.*



«This image shows the pain in my back: a tugging pain, radiating from the neck to the tailbone.» S.G.*

* initials changed.

Expert opinions (selection)

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Prof. Dr. med. dent. Jens Christoph Türp, Univ. Center for Dental Medicine Basel

«The picture cards are a great help in establishing dialogue with the patients. They have, often for the first time, the feeling that they are able to clearly explain their pain.

The descriptions are more detailed and fulsome than without the Dolography cards.»

Heike-Christine Strohmeyer-Kirsch, pain nurse, Klinikum Dortmund

«Using Dolography, it is possible to gain information about subjective pain perception that is not possible with conventional imaging techniques. Pain anamnesis is thereby extended by a fascinating dimension.»

Dr. med. Niklaus Egloff, Head of the Psychosomatic Competence Center, University Hospital Bern

«The images of Dolography elude semantic distinctiveness, as do pain sensations, thereby inviting the user to specify their verbal descriptions. The balance between clarity and ambiguity in the images provides a screen for the patients to project their associations.»

Dr. med. Katharina Haas, medical specialist for psychiatry and psychotherapy

About Dolography

Dolography enables patients and therapists to talk about pain in a precise and differentiated manner. Patients suffering from pain have often difficulties finding the right words for their sensations. Since pain therapy rests upon subjective reports by the patient, the difficulty to express pain often impedes treatment.

Using Dolography, communication between patients and therapists is facilitated:

- it externalises pain sensation
- it makes the experience of pain clearer and more concrete
- it differentiates the patient's perception of pain
- it renders the description of pain experience more precisely
- it makes subjective pain sensation more comprehensible for others
- it helps patients to feel understood and it strengthens their confidence in the treatment
- combining different images motivates the description of emotional and cognitive aspects of pain

Fields of application

Dolography addresses all age groups above adolescent and adults.

Dolography can, alone or in combination, be applied in different areas of pain therapy:

- as a helpful tool during pain anamnesis
- improving communication between patient and therapist during pain treatment
- as a complement to other pain therapeutic procedures
- for educational purposes
- to instruct patients
- in the field of counseling / coaching
- during single- and group therapy

Application

For the work with Dolography the following approach is proposed:

After the methodology has been clarified and agreed upon by the persons concerned, they are presented Dolography image cards in random order. They are then provided five to ten minutes to select six image cards that visualise their pain sensations best. They are then asked to explain their choices by detailing their pain sensation and its effects.

Depending on the therapy situation the procedure can be modified for best practice.

Collaboration with the University Hospital Bern

The Dolography images were developed by communication designers Sabine Affolter and Katja Rufenacht. By using explorative and discursive design methods, Affolter and Rufenacht developed a wide range of different image types based on aspects of pain description. The images were created and developed through an alternating process of image creation and interviewing patients. In collaboration with Dr.med. Niklaus Egloff from the University Hospital Bern, the images were tested to their suitability to describe pain sensations.