

QUACK IN THE BOX

Welcome, fellow malpractitioner! Take on the role of an unscrupulous, incompetent doctor, treating patients with whatever medicines or surgeries happen to be available that day. Sure, they may not “help,” but they sure are lucrative! Whoever ends the game with the most money, wins. Just be careful not to kill too many patients, or an angry mob will come after you...

Types of Cards: Here are the three types of cards in Quack in the Box:

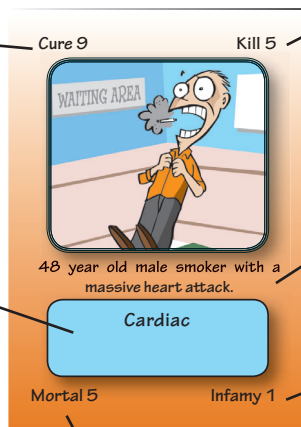
CURE: The number of Cure points needed to cure the patient, ranging from 2 (for a trivial condition) to a 10 (for “why didn’t you go to a real hospital?”).

TYPE OF ILLNESS: Including some of your notes from “med school.”

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Abdominal (belly) Surgery | Neuro (brain and spine) |
| Allergy | Oncology (cancer) |
| Bleeding | Pregnancy |
| Cardiac (heart) | Psychiatry |
| GI (stomach and guts) | Pulmonary (lungs) |
| Gynecology (girl parts) | Renal (kidneys) |
| Infectious (cooties) | Routine (bo-ring!) |
| Minor Trauma (boo-boos) | Thoracic (chest) Surgery |

The patient has between one and three of these. These attributes determine whether a Treatment card played on this patient will count toward Cure, Harm, or will have no effect.

PATIENT CARD



KILL: The number of Harm points the patient can sustain before no longer being able to pay the bills...permanently.

DESCRIPTION: Provides a human element in a game otherwise riddled with cynicism and greed.

INFAMY: The number of Infamy points the treating physician gets if the patient dies (see “Angry Mob,” below).

MORTAL: Some patients have a Mortal number. If this patient receives that many Treatment cards (not Anytimes) without being cured, they die. You screwed around for too long.

TYPE OF TREATMENT:

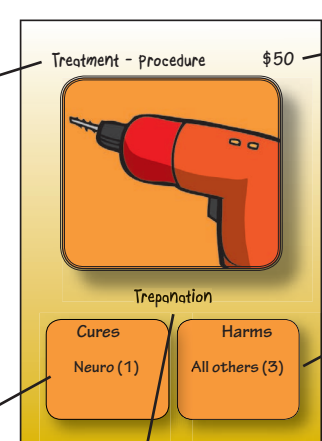
- Advice
- H&P (History&Physical)
- Laboratory
- Medicine
- Procedure
- Transfusion
- Xray

Certain Anytime cards will only affect specific types of Treatments.

CURES: A patient who gets a Treatment has their Type of Illness listed in the “Cure” column gains that number of Cure points. If this cumulatively equals or exceeds the patient’s Cure total he or she goes home (discard pile), happy to pay you for their “treatment.”

If the patient has more than one attribute in the Cure box, only use the largest number.

TREATMENT CARD



\$: The money you make if you play this Treatment on a patient who survives this round of Treatments.

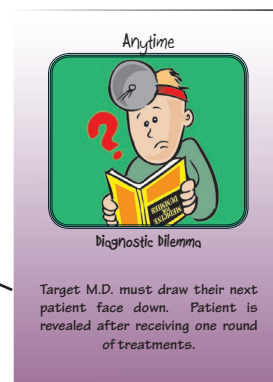
HARMS: A patient who gets a Treatment that has their Type of Illness listed here gains that number of Harm points. If this cumulative total equals or exceeds the patient’s Kill number, he or she dies. You don’t get any money for this round’s Treatments, and you gain the number of Infamy points on the deceased’s card.

If the patient has more than one attribute in the Harm box, only use the largest number. If this box says “All others” it means every other Type of Illness not listed in the Harm column *unless* the Treatment helped Cure the patient.

DESCRIPTION: For the love of God, don’t use to treat yourself in real life.

ANYTIME CARD

Anytime cards can be played at any time (hence the name), including when it isn’t your turn, and can be played on any player (even yourself). They have the special game effects printed on the card, and take effect immediately. If a played Anytime card has no valid targets, it is discarded without effect. If an Anytime card will have an effect in the future, keep it next to the targeted player or Patient as a reminder.

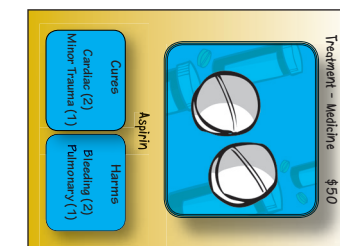


Starting the Game: Divide the cards into the Patient deck (the Patient Cards, with dark backs) and the Doctor deck (all other cards). Find a die. Shuffle each deck separately, then deal out six cards from the Doc deck to each player. You will need paper and pencil or other method to record Money and Infamy (players start the game with zero of each). Decide on an Angry Mob threshold (see #6 below).

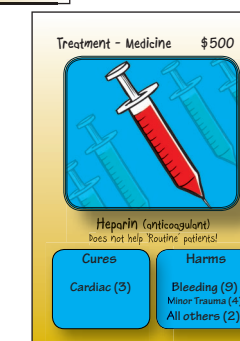
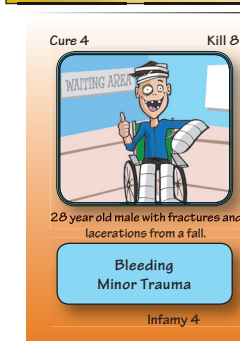
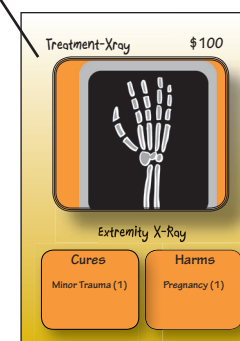
Sequence of Play: Each round of play consists of six phases:

- 1. Is it time to flee the country?** Before drawing any cards, you may choose to take a one-way trip to Switzerland. While some see this as an act of cowardice, others consider it “staying one step ahead of the pitchfork-wielding mob.” In Switzerland, your Money and Infamy values can no longer change, and you can no longer play Treatments. During your draw phase, draw until you get one Anytime card (discarding everything else). You can play Anytimes from Switzerland.
- 2. Draw phase.** Willing to face another day at the office? Then draw from the Doc deck until you have six cards. If the Doc deck is empty, reshuffle the discard pile.
- 3. Get a Patient, if you don’t already have one.** Draw from the Patient deck, and immediately collect their \$50 co-pay. If you already have a Patient, they remain in your office from round to round until they are Cured or, um, have an adverse outcome. You may never have more than one Patient at a time.
- 4. Roll for Required Treatments.** This isn’t evidence-based medicine here, people! Randomly generate a number from 2-5 (one way to do this is to roll a die, rerolling 1’s and 6’s). You **MUST** play this many Treatment cards on your Patient this round. If you don’t have that many Treatments, you must play all your Treatments, then play or discard one Anytime card.
- 5. Treat the Patient:** You may play your Treatment cards on your Patient in any order you choose.

If the Treatment Cures, place it to the left of the Patient. In this case, the Xray Cures Minor Trauma (one of this Patient’s attributes) for 1 point.

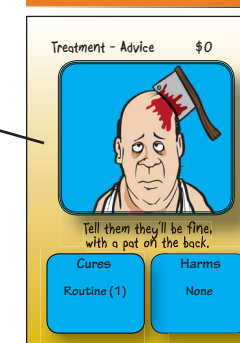


If the Treatment both Cures and Harms, place it across the top of the Patient. In this case, Aspirin Cures Minor Trauma for 1 point but Harms Bleeding for 2 points.



If the Treatment Harms, place it to the right of the Patient. In this case, Heparin Harms Bleeding for 9 points. That would Kill this Patient immediately! Note that although Minor Trauma is also listed in the Harm box, the Patient only gets the Harm from Bleeding (the largest number).

If the Treatment neither Cures nor Harms, place it below the Patient.



If the Patient’s Cure total is reached, he or she immediately leaves your office (is discarded). Collect your money from all Treatments played this round, and stop playing Treatments. If the Kill total is reached, the Patient also leaves the office... Collect no money from Treatments this round, and gain Infamy. If the Cure and Kill total are reached with the same Treatment, the Patient dies. If the Patient has a “Mortal: X” condition, they die when they get the Xth Treatment, *unless* that last card Cures them.

6. The Angry Mob phase: If your Infamy total reaches or exceeds the prospectively determined Angry Mob Threshold, you lose and are out of the game (use your imagination as to what that entails). Don Gusano suggests Angry Mob Thresholds between 6 (for a short game) and 12 (for a long one).

Ending the Game, and Who Won? When all but 2 players have fled the country or been eliminated, each remaining player takes one more turn. Then, total up your money. Whoever has the most, and hasn’t succumbed to the Angry Mob, wins.

Suggested Variants: *Turbo-Infamy:* when a Patient dies, everyone gains 1 Infamy. *Group Practice:* You can play your Treatments on any Patient, not just your own. You get paid for Treatments you played on any Patients who survive the round. Whoever plays the killing card on a Patient gets all the Infamy for that Patient. *Deathmatch:* Nobody can flee the country.