

Adverse Drug Reactions Kill Over 100,000 In Hospitals Annually.

This statistic is according to a recent article appearing in The Journal of American Medical Association. The author, Bruce Pomeranz, M.D., Ph.D., reviewed 39 different studies of adverse drug reactions in hospitals, and came up with some alarming conclusions. According to Pomeranz's research, he estimates that 2,216,000 hospital patients experienced serious adverse drug reactions (side effects) and 106,000 died from these reactions in 1994 alone. This astounding number accounted for 4.6% of *all* recorded deaths in the U.S. in that year. This makes drug reaction deaths the fourth leading cause of death in the country.

Adverse drug reactions as defined in this study were not small problems. These reactions were only included in the study if they required hospitalization, prolonged hospitalization, caused permanent disability or resulted in death.

Probably the most surprising finding of the study is that the rate of adverse drug reactions has not changed over the last 32 years. This suggests that despite an increase in cost and technology, the drug related care given in hospitals has not improved its safety level or its death rate in over three decades.