

Parents 'Not Told of Drug Errors'

Research published in the journal *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, and reported by the BBC said almost half the parents whose children received the wrong medication after hospital mistakes were never informed of the error, research has found.

The survey, covered five years of work at a paediatric teaching hospital in Scotland. But the level of secrecy surrounding the blunders did surprise the researchers.

The study was carried out at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow - one of the UK's leading specialist centres for children and babies requiring complex and risky treatment.

It found that one mistake occurred for every 662 patients admitted to the hospital, although most of these happened in children under the age of two.

Three-fifths of the mistakes happened on medical wards, and six out of ten were made by nurses, rather than doctors, as nurses are often responsible for measuring out the right quantity of drugs for patients.

Most of the errors were classed as "minor", even though 10% required some extra treatment to rectify.

The study authors said they believed doctors and nurses in some cases recorded the incident as minor in order to deflect criticism and possible repercussions.

However, in 48% of cases, the parents were never told what had happened to their children.