

## Annual Death Rate Due to Medications Continues to Rise!

The following is reprinted from a recent article in the Boston Globe entitled, "Medication-Error Deaths Soar in U.S.," by Richard A. Knox,

"The incidence of death due to medication errors increased dramatically between 1983 and 1993 and shows no signs of abating, new research on the subject shows. Over the ten-year period in question, patient deaths due to medication leaped 260 percent overall, and 850 percent among persons receiving outpatient care. And these figures may represent "only the tip of the iceberg," according to David Phillips of U.C. at San Diego, who points out that many prescription error deaths aren't listed as such on death certificates. Death certificates from the ten-year period provided the raw data on which the findings are based.

Researchers involved in the study say that the increase in medication fatalities cannot be attributed simply to patients taking larger-than-prescribed doses of medication. Their comments are borne out by the fact that the sharpest increase in such deaths among outpatients occurred with the use of anesthetics. Anesthesia drugs are not self-administered, suggesting that the increase in outpatient care as part of overall cost-cutting measures among hospitals may be part of the problem. The study found that deaths due to anesthetics among outpatients increased 400 percent compared to anesthesia deaths occurring in hospitals. Surprisingly, the steep rise in medication deaths is not due to an increase in prescriptions, which during the ten-year period rose 39 percent, compared to the 260 percent increase in medication error deaths.

Compounding the problem, according to research conducted by Harvard University, is the fact that medication errors commonly occur even in the nation's highest-ranking teaching hospitals. The findings clearly indicate the need for a close reexamination of modern medicine's over-reliance on drug use and symptom care as primary approaches for treating illness."

(Fortunately Chiropractic is a drugless health profession that deals with correcting causes and not just treating effects.)