

Drug Errors Common in U.S. Hospitals

Errors such as giving patients the wrong drug dose, delivering medication at the wrong time, giving patients an unauthorized drug or forgetting to give patients their medicine occurred in nearly one out of every five medication doses given in hospitals and nursing facilities included in this study.

The study findings underscore the need to revamp the medication delivery and administration systems of US hospitals. Possible ways to improve the delivery of medication include automation, robotics and bar code systems. The findings are based on observations made at 36 hospitals and nursing facilities in Colorado and Georgia. A trained research pharmacist verified all observations.

Overall, mistakes were made in nearly 20% of doses given. The most common errors were:

- Giving medication at the wrong time.
- Omitting medication.
- Giving patients the wrong dose.
- Giving patients a drug that had not been authorized.

[Archives of Internal Medicine](#) **September 9, 2002;162:1897-1903**