

Study: Drug reactions kill an estimated 100,000 a year

CHICAGO (CNN) -- Adverse reactions to prescription and over-the-counter medicines kill more than 100,000 Americans and seriously injure an additional 2.1 million each year, researchers say.

Such reactions -- which do not include prescribing errors or drug abuse -- rank at least sixth among causes of death in the United States, behind heart disease, cancer, lung disease, strokes and accidents, according to a report published in this week's Journal of the American Medical Association. The report was based on an analysis of existing studies.

"Serious adverse drug reactions are frequent ... more so than generally recognized," the researchers said.

Researchers at the University of Toronto examined 39 studies and estimated that an average of 106,000 deaths at U.S. hospitals in 1994 were due to bad reactions to drugs.