

Iatrogenic Disease

The 3rd Most Fatal Disease in the USA

How Prepared are You to **Not** Become a National Statistic?

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Iatrogenic Disease is defined as a disease that is caused by medical treatment. Read major headlines around the globe on this serious disease.

If a Jumbo Jet crashed and killed 280 people everyday.. 365 days a year.. year after year.. would you be concerned about flying?? Would you question the Federal Aviation Administration? Would you demand answers?? Think about it .. close to 100,000 people dying every year from plane crashes. Sounds Ridiculous??!!

Well think again.. what if you were told that over **100,000 people are killed and over 2 million people maimed and disabled every year** .. year after year from modern medicine.. would you believe it??

Well these may be my words.. but read the following articles from the most respected medical journals and institutions (Journal of the American Medical Association, Harvard University, Centers for Disease Control, British medical journal The Lancet, New England Journal of Medicine and national news (New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, US World Report) and you be the judge..

Writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, Dr. Starfield has documented the tragedy of the traditional medical paradigm in the following statistics:

Deaths Per Year	Cause
106,000	Non-error, negative effects of drugs ²
80,000	Infections in hospitals ¹⁰
45,000	Other errors in hospitals ¹⁰
12,000	Unnecessary surgery ⁸
7,000	Medication errors in hospitals ⁹
250,000	Total deaths per year from iatrogenic* causes

* The term *iatrogenic* is defined as "induced in a patient by a physician's activity, manner, or therapy. Used especially to pertain to a complication of treatment."

Furthermore, these estimates of death due to error are lower than those in a recent Institutes of Medicine report. If the higher estimates are used, the deaths due to iatrogenic causes would range from **230,000 to 284,000**. **Even at the lower estimate of 225,000 deaths per year, this constitutes the third leading cause of death in the U.S.**

Dr. Starfield offers several caveats in the interpretations of these numbers:

First, most of the data are derived from studies in hospitalized patients.

Second, these estimates are for deaths only and do not include the many negative effects that are associated with disability or discomfort.

Third, the estimates of death due to error are lower than those in the IOM report. If the higher estimates are used, the deaths due to iatrogenic causes would range from 230,000 to 284,000. In any case, **225,000 deaths per year constitutes the third leading cause of death in the United States, after deaths from heart disease and cancer.** Even if these figures are overestimated, there is a wide margin between these numbers of deaths and the next leading cause of death (cerebro-vascular disease).

Another analysis concluded that between 4% and 18% of consecutive patients experience negative effects in outpatient settings, with:

- 116 million extra physician visits
- 77 million extra prescriptions
- 17 million emergency department visits
- 8 million hospitalizations
- 3 million long-term admissions
- 199,000 additional deaths
- \$77 billion in extra costs

The high cost of the health care system is considered to be a deficit, but it seems to be tolerated under the assumption that better health results from more expensive care. However, evidence from a few studies indicates that as many as 20% to 30% of patients receive inappropriate care. **An estimated 44,000 to 98,000 among these patients die each year as a result of medical errors.**

This might be tolerable if it resulted in better health, but does it? **Out of 13 countries in a recent comparison, the United States ranks an average of 12th (second from the bottom) for 16 available health indicators.** More specifically, the ranking of the U.S. on several indicators was:

- 13th (last) for low-birth-weight percentages
- 13th for neonatal mortality and infant mortality overall
- 11th for post-neonatal mortality
- 13th for years of potential life lost (excluding external causes)
- 11th for life expectancy, at 1 year for females, 12th for males
- 10th for life expectancy, at 15 years for females, 12th for males
- 10th for life expectancy, at 40 years for females, 9th for males
- 7th for life expectancy, at 65 years for females, 7th for males
- 3rd for life expectancy, at 80 years for females, 3rd for males
- 10th for age-adjusted mortality
- The poor performance of the U.S. was recently confirmed by a World Health Organization study which used different data and ranked the United States as 15th among 25 industrialized countries.

It has been known that drugs are the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. This makes it clear that the more frightening number is that doctors are the third leading cause of death in this country, killing nearly a quarter million people a year. These statistics are further confused because most medical coding only describes the cause of organ failure and does not identify iatrogenic causes at all.

Care -- not treatment -- is the answer. Drugs, surgery and hospitals become increasingly dangerous for chronic disease cases. Facilitating the God-given healing capacity by improving the diet, exercise, and lifestyle is the key. Effective interventions for the underlying emotional and spiritual wounding behind most chronic disease is critical for the reinvention of our medical paradigm. These numbers suggest that reinvention of our medical paradigm is called for.

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Dec. 7, 1999 | Representatives from all quarters of the health-care debate came together in the White House Rose Garden Tuesday to get behind a pretty simple premise: Health-care workers shouldn't make the kind of mistakes that cost the lives of as many as 98,000 patients a year.

Flanked by representatives of the health-care industry, business, labor and government, President Clinton signed an executive memorandum directing his health-care quality task force to analyze last week's Institute of Medicine study that quantified the deaths attributable to medical errors, many of them as a result of wrong prescription-drug doses.

The independent study estimated that medical mistakes kill between 44,000 and 98,000 Americans each year. About 7,000 deaths were attributed to errors in prescribing or dispensing drugs. The IOM found flaws in the way hospitals, clinics and pharmacies operate. "Once you know about a problem, you're under a moral obligation to deal with it," Clinton said when asked whether admitting mistakes might expose health-care professionals to increased lawsuits. "Whatever the consequences are, we have to go forward."