

Medical Errors and How Patients Should Respond; The CBCD Makes Recommendations

Medical errors are now the third leading cause of death. What does this mean for patients?

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, May 9, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ --

The leading cause of death in America, according to the CDC, is heart disease. This is followed quickly by chronic respiratory diseases. The CDC then lists accidents, or unintended injuries as the third leading cause of death.

But is it?

A report published in the prestigious BMJ (formerly the British Medical Journal) suggests otherwise. (1) Data presented by Martin A. Mackery and Michael Daniel shows that human error in the field of medicine (medical error) is deadly. In fact, their calculations show that medical errors are the third leading cause of death in America.

"Medical error is not included on death certificates or in rankings of cause of death." However, "A 2004 report of inpatient deaths associated with the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research Patient Safety Indicators in the Medicare population estimated that 575,000 deaths were caused by medical error between 2000 and 2002, which is about 195,000 deaths a year. Similarly, the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General examining the health records of hospital

inpatients in 2008, reported 180,000 deaths due to medical error a year among Medicare beneficiaries alone. Using similar methods, Classen et al described a rate of 1.13%. If this rate is applied to all registered US hospital admissions in 2013 it translates to over 400,000 deaths a year, more than four times the IOM (Institutes of Medicine) estimate." (1)



Medical error leading to patient death is under-recognized in many other countries, including the UK and Canada.” (1)

In light of the above information, The Center for the Biology of Chronic Disease (CBCD) urges patients to take charge of their own health. Doctors are human. They make mistakes. While they are professionals and hold advanced medical knowledge that the average person does not, they are not 100% correct 100% of the time. Patients should take charge of their health by listening to their primary care doctor, and then getting a second opinion if necessary. Patients should also educate themselves by going to reputable, authoritative medical sites designed for patients and learn everything they can about their condition and possible treatments.

Some of these sites include the CDC.gov, WebMD.com, and Patient.co.uk.

The CBCD also recommends that patients learn more about complimentary medicine, which is comprised of treatments that are used along with standard medical treatments but are not considered to be standard treatments. Many can be obtained without a prescription.

“We recommend that individuals educate themselves and that they be aware of their medical options at all times. After all, it is their health, and they have the most to gain or lose from every medical decision made.” - Greg Bennett, CBCD

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Learn more about the Center for the Biology of Chronic Disease (CBCD) here:

<http://www.cbcd.net>

References:

(1) Mackery, Martin A., and Michael Daniel. "Medical Error—the Third Leading Cause of Death in the US." The BMJ (May 3, 2016). Web. 9 May 2016. <http://www.bmj.com/content/353/bmj.i2139>.

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