

Table Of Iatrogenic Deaths In The United States (Deaths induced inadvertently by a physician or surgeon or by medical treatment or diagnostic procedures)

Condition	Deaths	Cost Billion \$s	Author
Adverse Drug Reactions	106,000	12	Lazarou (1) Suh (49)
Medical error	98,000	2	IOM (6)
Bedsore	115,000	55	Xakellis (7) Barczak (8)
Infection	88,000	5	Weinstein (9) MMWR (10)
Malnutrition	108,800	—	Nurses Coalition (11)
Outpatients	199,000	77	Starfield (12) Weingart (1, 12)
Unnecessary Procedures	37,136	122	HCUP(3, 13)
Surgery-Related	32,000	9	AHRQ(8,5)
TOTAL	783,936		282

We could have an even higher death rate by using Dr. Lucien Leape's 1997 medical and drug error rate of 3 million. (14) Multiplied by the fatality rate of 14 percent (that Leape used in 1994 (16) we arrive at an annual death rate of 420,000 for drug errors and medical errors combined. If we put this number in place of Lazorou's 106,000 drug errors and the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) 98,000 medical errors, we could add another 216,000 deaths making a total of 999,936 deaths annually.

ADR/med error	420,000	\$200 billion	Leape 1997(14)
TOTAL	999,936		

Annual Unnecessary Medical Events

Unnecessary Events	People Affected (Millions)	Iatrogenic Events (Millions)
Hospitalization	8.9 (4)	1.78 (16)
Procedures	7.5 (3)	1.3 (40)
TOTAL	16.4	3.08

The enumerating of unnecessary medical events is very important in our analysis. Any medical procedure that is invasive and not necessary must be considered as part of the larger iatrogenic picture. Unfortunately, cause and effect go unmonitored. The figures on unnecessary events represent people ("patients") who are thrust into a dangerous health care system. They are helpless victims. Each one of these 16.4 million lives is being affected in a way that could have a fatal consequence. Simply entering a hospital could result in the following (out of 16. 4 million people):

- 2.1 percent chance of a serious adverse drug reaction (186,000) (1)
- 5 percent to 6 percent chance of acquiring a nosocomial [hospital] infection (489,500) (9)
- 4 percent to 36 percent chance of having an iatrogenic injury in hospital (medical error and adverse drug reactions) (1.78 million) (16)
- 17 percent chance of a procedure error (1.3 million) (40)

All the statistics above represent a one-year time span. Imagine the numbers over a 10-year period.

Working with the most conservative figures from our statistics we project the following 10-year death rates.

Medical Intervention

Projected Ten-Year Death Rates	
Condition	10-Year Deaths
Adverse Drug Reaction	1.06 million
Medical error	0.98 million
Bedsore	1.15 million
Nosocomial Infection	0.88 million
Malnutrition	1.09 million
Outpatients	1.99 million
Unnecessary Procedures	371,360
Surgery-related	320,000
TOTAL	7,841,360 (7.8 million)

Our projected statistic of 7.8 million iatrogenic deaths is more than all the casualties from wars that America has fought in its entire history.

Our projected figures for unnecessary medical events occurring over a 10-year period are also dramatic.

Unnecessary Intervention

Projected Ten-Year Statistics		
Unnecessary Events	10-Year Number	Iatrogenic Events
Hospitalization	89 million	17 million
Procedures	75 million	13 million
TOTAL	164 million	30 million

These projected figures show that a total of 164 million people, approximately 56 percent of the population of the United States, have been treated unnecessarily by the medical industry—in other words, nearly 50,000 people per day.