

"Death by Medicine"

NEW PAPER INDICTS AMERICAN MEDICAL SYSTEM

Editorial Staff

Death by Medicine¹ is an eye-opening paper published as a Web exclusive in the March 2004 issue of *Life Extension*, a monthly magazine dedicated to "up-to-date coverage of the latest scientific and medical breakthroughs from around the world." As the grim title suggests, the paper explores the hazards of conventional medicine in the United States, analyzing and combining the complete published literature to date regarding injuries and deaths attributable to medicine.

In their introduction, the authors note: "Never before have the complete statistics on the multiple causes of iatrogenesis been combined in one paper. Medical science amasses tens of thousands of papers annually - each one a tiny fragment of the whole picture.... Each specialty, each division of medicine, keeps their own records and data on morbidity and mortality like pieces of a puzzle. But the numbers and statistics were always hiding in plain sight. We have now completed the painstaking work of reviewing thousands and thousands of studies. Finally putting the puzzle together, we came up with some disturbing answers."

The "disturbing answers" the five researchers uncover are an indictment of the entire American medical system:

- "The total number of deaths caused by conventional medicine is an astounding 783,936 per year."
- "The number of people having in-hospital, adverse drug reactions (ADR) to prescribed medicine is 2.2 million."
- "Richard Besser, of the CDC, in 1995, said the number of unnecessary antibiotics prescribed annually for viral infections was 20 million. Dr. Besser, in 2003, now refers to tens of millions of unnecessary antibiotics."
- "The number of unnecessary medical and surgical procedures performed annually is 7.5 million."
- "The number of people exposed to unnecessary hospitalization annually is 8.9 million."
- "It is evident that the American medical system is the leading cause of death and injury in the United States."

The authors are especially concerned that "(a)s few as 5% and only up to 20% of iatrogenic acts are ever reported."

They also project that the costs associated with deaths caused by medical interventions total approximately \$282 billion per year, and estimate that the costs for unnecessary hospitalization and medical procedures total \$16.4 million per year.

As if this information isn't startling enough, the paper goes on to review the drug industry world. The authors discuss the dangers of many types of drugs and how their overuse is affecting our health and our environment. Next, they discuss the dangers of surgical procedures, the lack of error reporting and unnecessary hospitalization. The paper concludes with a discussion of how women are mistreated by medicine, and the dangers awaiting the unsuspecting elderly: "A total of

20% of all deaths from all causes occur in nursing homes."

The complete text of "Death by Medicine" can be found online at www.lef.org/magazine/mag2004/mar2004_aws_i_death_01.html. More than 150 references and an extensive appendix support the discussions and conclusions presented in this paper. While many will find it quite disturbing, every health care provider and every patient should read this paper.

Reference

1. Gary Null, PhD, Carolyn Dean, MD ND, Martin Feldman, MD, Debora Rasio, MD, Dorothy Smith, PhD. "Death by Medicine." *Life Extension* March 2004 (Web exclusive).

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