

I.Q. -- Interesting Quotes

Editorial Staff

Errors in Medicine

This excerpt is taken from an editorial in the Journal of the American Medical Association, "Error in Medicine."¹ It describes the potential dangers inherent in hospital stays.

"Also in 1991, the Harvard Medical Practice Study² reported the results of a population-based study of iatrogenic injury in patients hospitalized in New York State in 1984.^{2,3} Nearly 4% of patients suffered an injury that prolonged their hospital stay or resulted in measurable disability. For New York State, this equalled 98,609 patients in 1984. Nearly 14% of these injuries were fatal. If these rates are typical of the United States, then 180,000 people die each year partly as a result of iatrogenic injury, the equivalent of three jumbo-jet crashes every 2 days."

References

1. Leape LL. Error in medicine. JAMA 1994;272:1851-1857.
2. Brennan TA, Leupe LL, Laird N, et al. Incidence of adverse events and negligence in hospitalized patients; results of the Harvard Medical Practice Study I. New England Journal of Medicine 1991;324:370-376.
3. Leape LL, Brennan TA, Laird N, et al. The nature of adverse events in hospitalized patients; results of the Harvard Medical Practice Study II. New England Journal of Medicine 1991; 324:377-384.

MAY 1995