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Busy ER leads to medication errors in children

Reuters Health reported on October 18, 2002 that a recent study presented to the 2002 American Academy of Pediatrics Conference found that children treated at busy urban hospital emergency rooms run a high risk of medication errors which can lead to severe adverse outcomes.

The study was conducted at the Albany Medical Center in New York by Dr. Renee Rasmus and her colleagues. They reviewed more than 56,000 pediatric drug orders given by the emergency room over a 48 month period. A total of 176 "clinically significant" prescribing errors had been made during the time period studied. This rate amounted to 3.1 errors per 1,000 admissions. According to Rasmus, this rate was "surprising, but expected. Albany Medical is a busy ER. We have resident doctors and academics writing orders in a very busy environment."

Dosing errors were by far the most common error, comprising 82% of the total. Drug allergies, wrong formulations and wrong drugs made up the difference.

Commentary: How sick the patient is has no bearing whatsoever on medical staff not checking to make sure they have the right drug or dosage for the right patient anymore than the size of the hospital or its staff does. With this kind of bury-your-head-in-the-sand attitude it - doesn't surprise us that there are 1 million injuries and 98,000 deaths a year in the name of health care.

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with natural chiropractic care.**