

of the Week...

Causes of Prescription Errors

- Insufficient training
- Doctors are under time pressure with lots of distractions
 - Problems with the use of computer systems
- Not being aware of the interactions/side effects of the drugs prescribed

Prescription Drug Errors Back In The News

According to a report published last month by the General Medical Council in the U.K. (so we may extrapolate and consider the results here to be even greater), found that general medical practitioners may be regularly making mistakes when prescribing drugs.

The main findings of the recent study are:

- 1 in 20 prescription items was associated with an error.
- One in eight of all patients had a prescription with an error.
- Four in ten patients aged 75 years or older had a prescription with an error.
- 30% of prescribing errors involved “incomplete information on the prescription”.

- 18% of prescribing errors involved dose or strength errors.
- 11% of prescribing errors involved incorrect timing of doses.
- 96% of errors were judged to be minor or moderate.

But wait...there's more:

- There was a 16% increased risk of error for each additional medicine beyond 1.
- Children and people aged 75 years and older were almost twice as likely to have an error as those 15–64 years old.
- Being prescribed drugs for heart issues, infections, cancer and immunotherapy, musculo-skeletal disorders, eye and skin disorders all increased the risk of error.

The Bottom Line...The Bottom Line...The Bottom Line...

Prescribing and medical errors...and the resulting problems caused, have been in and out of the daily news for decades and the proposed solutions have always been to have more oversight, to be more careful, to reduce the strain on doctors...all of these, as is medicine itself, are directed at the symptoms of the problem instead of the cause of the problem. The cause of the problem is a public that believes the decades old propaganda that they are missing some drug to be healthy.

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