

Prevention of Medical Errors
Florida Osteopathic Medical Association
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Anthony N. Ottaviani, DO, MPH, MACOI, FCCP

Chief Academic Officer

Program Director Pulmonary Critical Care Fellowship

Clinical professor of Medicine

Regional Dean

Nova Southeastern University

West Coast Academic Center

Largo Medical Center

Objectives

Review and Discuss

- Florida Board of Osteopathic Medicine Most Common Misdiagnosed Conditions.
- Review Top Myths of Medical Errors
- Root Cause Analysis.
- What Physicians can do to Improve Prevention of Medical Errors.

Institute of Medicine

- **Debate after the IOM report about the accuracy of its estimates.**
- **Whether the deaths of 100,000, 200,000 or 400,000 is unknown but at any level significant.**
- **Action and progress on patient safety is frustratingly slow.**

Journal of Patient Safety: September 2013 - Volume 9 - Issue 3 - p 122–128, doi: 10.1097/PTS.0b013e3182948a69

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Most Common Misdiagnosed Conditions

- Inappropriate prescribing of opioids
- Failure or delay in diagnosing cancer.
- Failure to accurately diagnose cardiac and abdominal conditions.
- Surgical complications/errors.
- Wrong-site/patient surgery.
- Neurological conditions.*
- Urological complications.*
- Pregnancy-related conditions.*

Florida Administrative Code 64B15-13.001(3)4(f)

*Florida Board of Medicine

Inappropriate Prescribing of Opioids

- Misdiagnosis
- Failure to diagnose addiction.
- Psychiatric conditions.
- Diversion.

State Opioid Prescribing Policy: Florida

Florida Opioid Prescribing Policy Documentation!!!

- Assess the patient.
- Adequate rationale for opioids?
- Establish treatment goals.
- Abuse – must screen/monitor for addiction potential
- Deviation from “contract” (must have documentation)
- Blind acceptance.
- System failure (testing results).
- Unsupported clinical rationale for OPIOIDS.
- Diversion.

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Errors

Failure to Accurately Diagnose

Cardiac Conditions

Abdominal Conditions

Surgical Complications

Surgical Errors

Medical Errors - How Common?

Swiss Cheese Model or Cumulative Act Effect

Model of accident causation illustrates that, although many layers of defense lie between hazards and accidents, there are flaws in each layer that, if aligned, can allow the accident to occur.

Wide Spectrum of Medical Errors

General Types Medical Errors (IOM)

Diagnostic

Treatment

Performance

Communications

Systems

Medication

Diagnostic Errors

Top Myths About Diagnostic Errors
Held by
Patients
Physicians
and
Healthcare Systems

Top Myths about Diagnostic Errors Held by Patients

1. No news is good news.
2. My doctors are talking to one another.
3. My doctor is different.
4. Somebody is in charge of my diagnosis.
5. There is always an answer.
6. My hunches don't count as much as my physician's.
7. I would be disloyal to my physician if I ask for a second opinion.
8. My insurance won't pay for a second opinion.
9. The more tests I have, the better.
10. Diagnosis errors won't happen to me.

Top Myths about Diagnostic Errors Held by Physicians

1. It won't happen to me.
2. I can trust my intuition.
3. Physicians know what they know and know what they don't know.
4. I communicate effectively with my patients.
5. I'm a good listener.
6. Most diagnostic errors involve rare or uncommon diseases.
7. I always make a complete differential diagnosis.
8. If I made a diagnostic error, I'd find out about it.
9. I speak personally with the Radiologist about important tests.
10. I have a reliable system in place to track requested tests.

Top Myths about Diagnostic Errors Held within Healthcare Systems

1. They don't happen here.
2. If something went wrong, I would hear about it.
3. We are already dealing with the problem.
4. They are too complex to understand.
5. That's the physician's problem.
6. We open ourselves to liability if we look too hard at diagnosis errors.
7. There's nothing we can do.
8. Only physicians have a role in diagnosis.

Diagnostic Errors

- Wrong, delayed or missed.
- Cognitive and system errors.
- Failure to employ indicated tests.
- Use of outmoded tests.
- Failure to act on results of monitoring or testing.

Diagnostic Errors

- Harmful, under-recognized, under-studied and not integrated into quality assurance measures or activities.
- Occurs 5-15% of the time.
- Autopsy data , self -reports of diagnostic error, Patient self-reports of experiencing diagnostic error, Databases of reported error, Peer reviewed journal studies.

Diagnostic Errors As Cause of Death?

- Many error unknown: decline in autopsy, patient goes elsewhere.
- Harvard Study diagnostic errors - 17% of adverse events (Physician Insurer, PIAA 2010)
- Malpractice claims involving death - diagnostic error is the top allegation at 26%

Diagnostic Errors

Hospital More than Clinic?

- Frequency in claims #1 cause of claims in ambulatory care and #2 in hospitals (after improper performance of a procedure) - totals fairly close.
- More common diagnosis missed (not the rare ones)
 - the common killers: heart attack, cancer and stroke:
Breast, MI, Stroke

Causes of Diagnostic Error?

- Multi – Factorial Usually six factors on average in IM.
- Physician knowledge is least often the problem.
- More often due to cognitive error, systems errors including communication errors.
- Most common of all, the combination of cognitive and systems errors.

Cognitive vs System Errors

- Cognitive Errors:

Occurs in physician's processing of information - thinking process: latching on prematurely to a diagnosis and abandoning the search for evidence to the contrary.

- Systems Errors:

Occurs between the inter-related pieces in healthcare systems: physicians – others involved in care “dropping the ball” in the referral - consultation process or in the hand-off process. Lost or unreported test results.

Cognitive vs System Errors

Diagnostic Errors Common in all Specialties

Diagnosis Subject to Error?

Diagnosis Subject to Error?

- Rare disease?
- Common diagnosis - MI, cancer, CVA
- Breast cancer - dominant diagnostic error.
- Acute MI - adult primary care specialties: PC, EM, Cardiology.
- Stroke diagnostic error – 9% of time
- FP - MI, breast ca, appendicitis, colorectal ca, lung ca.
- P E, aortic dissection not known as autopsy rate declined so these and others are under-detected at an unknown rate.

Failure or Delay in Diagnosing Cancer

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Breast Cancer

- One in eight women.
- Most commonly diagnosed cancer in women.
- Leading cause of death.
- Rare in men BUT can occur.

Breast Cancer

- Mammography was developed in the 1950s and became a common diagnostic tool in the 1960s.
- Key method for detecting breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat.
- 2005, about 68% of all US women between 40 and 64 years of age had had mammography in the past 2 years, according to insurance studies. All US states except Utah require private health insurance plans and Medicaid to pay for breast cancer screening.
- Standards for the timing of mammography vary by organization and by patient history. The US Preventive Services Task Force currently recommends that low-risk women older than 50 years receive mammography once every 2 years. ACOG currently recommends annual mammograms for all women 40 and older.

Breast Cancer

- Failure to engage high risk groups
- Failure to exam
- Poor follow up on palpable findings*
- Questionable mammogram – dense breast tissue – no breast ultrasound!
- Failure to workup mammographic abnormalities
- Consistency with American College of Radiology Standards
- Technical or technician performance issues
- Loss of reports
- Interpretative errors (most common reason for claims)
- Communication errors

Failure or Delay in Diagnosing Cancer

Lung Cancer

- Lung cancer - most common cancer worldwide.
- Most patients present because of symptoms
- Hemoptysis, unexplained, change in cough
- Incidental finding on chest imaging.
- Delay in diagnosis
- Failure to follow through
- Communication between consultants

Cancer Misdiagnosis – Reasons?

- Miscommunication, - lab failing to accurately report biopsy results to physician or in a timely fashion or office failing to inform the patient about test results.
- Lab errors, including mishandling samples, misreporting results or incorrectly interpreting tests.
- Failure to “see the big picture” that could indicate cancer when synthesizing all the data about a patient.
- The failure to follow up on diagnostic results, including failing to refer the patient to consultant for evaluation and treatment.
- Not screening a patient who is at-risk for a certain type of cancer.
- Discounting - potential for cancer because of the patient’s characteristics, such as assuming a woman is too young to develop breast cancer, rectal bleeding in young patient etc.
- Many cases of negligent cancer misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis involve a series of system or process breakdowns.

Diagnosis Subject to Error Cardiovascular

- MI
- CVA - Stroke diagnostic error – 9% of time
- P E
- Aortic Dissection

Reducing Diagnostic Errors

- Increase awareness of whole team (patient and team).
- Awareness of cognitive errors - differentials.
- Aware of system failures, conflicts.
- EMR – problematic for some physicians.
- Attention to process in office/hospital.
- Assure every member of team are committed to culture of patient safety and patient coming first.

Treatment Errors

- Medication errors are major concern.
- Error in the performance of an operation, procedure, or test.
- Error in administering the treatment.
- Error in the dose or method of using a drug.
- Avoidable delay in treatment or in responding to an abnormal test.
- Inappropriate (not indicated) care.

Preventive/Other Errors

- Failure to provide prophylactic treatment.
- Inadequate monitoring or follow-up of treatment.
- Failure of communication.
- Equipment failure
- Other system failure

Systems Errors

- Complex environment
- Organized practices vs disorganization
- Reporting
- Recording
- Human factor

Medication Errors

- 7,000 + fatalities secondary medication errors
- Hand written RX
- Abbreviations
- Cross checking drug interactions
- Multiple pharmacies
- Allergies
- Communication with patient
- Patient knowledge of their medication

Polypharmacy

National Health & Nutrition Examination Survey

- 13,869 aged 65 or older –1988-2010.
- Rx verified by medication containers.
- No. of meds increased from two to five.
- No. of medication > five – tripled (12.8 to 39.0).
- Increase in # of medication in patient with:
 - increase in BMI
 - Higher income – poverty ratio
 - Former smoker

EMR ISSUES

- Failure of system design
- Does not function as a “folder/file/chart”
- Confusing interface
- Lack of patient physician contact
- Incorrect information entered
- Tedious data entry
- Difficulty reviewing prior data timely
- System failure unable to access data
- Other issues
- Scribes?

Wrong-Site Surgery Defined

- Wrong patient
- Wrong body part
- Wrong side
- Wrong procedure
- Unnecessary/unauthorized procedure
- Wrong level of the correctly identified site

Wrong Site Surgery

- Largely preventable patient safety incidents that should not occur if the available preventive measures were implemented.
- Unexpected - resulting in serious physical, emotional injury, risk - to a patient.
- Not related to the natural course patients illness and being the most frequent sentinel event accounting for 13.4% of such events reviewed by the Joint Commission between 1995–2010.
- Wrong-site surgery is considered indicative of serious underlying patient-safety problem.

Wrong Site Surgery

- 9,744 paid settlements for surgical “never events” in the United states from 1990 – 2010 to \$1.3b.
- Mortality occurring in 6.6% of the patients.
- Permanent injury in 32.9%.
- Temporary injury in 59.2%.
- Cost of these events to the healthcare system and the enormous harm to the patients call for vigorous attention.

US Department of Health and Human Services Retained Objects

- Involves up to 1 in 5000 persons.
- 2008 study published in *Annals of Surgery* found that mistakes in tool and sponge counts happened in 12.5% of surgeries.
- Nursing and surgical groups recommend that each member of the surgical team play an equal role in assuring accuracy of the counts.
- Recently, manufacturers have made sponges with threads visible on x-rays, radiofrequency identification systems, and bar coding to alert staff about missing sponges.

Standards of Practice for Surgery/Procedure-64B15-14.006

Responsibility of the treating physician or an equivalently trained DO or MD practicing within a Board approved GME program to explain the procedure to and obtain the informed consent of the patient.

Not necessary to witness signature

Except in life-threatening emergencies - once the patient has been prepared for the elective surgery/procedure and the team has been gathered in the surgery/procedure room and immediately prior to the initiation of any procedure, the surgery/procedure team will pause and the physician(s) performing the procedure will verbally confirm the patient's identification, the intended procedure and the correct surgical/procedure site.

Physician performing the surgery/procedure shall not make any incision or perform any surgery or procedure prior to performing this required confirmation.

Notes of the surgery/procedure shall specifically reflect when this confirmation procedure was completed and which personnel on the surgical team confirmed each item

Standards of Practice for Surgery/Procedure

64B15-14.006

- **Confirmation of the patient's identity shall be made by using two or more of the Two or following corroborating patient identifiers:**
 1. Name.
 2. Assigned identification number.
 3. Telephone number.
 4. Date of Birth.
 5. Social security number.
 6. Address.
 7. Photograph.
- **Applicable to anesthesia**
- **If the physician(s) leave(s) the room where the procedure is being performed, upon his or her return, the pause set forth in paragraph (b) above must be performed again.**
- **(3) Management of postsurgical care.**
- **(4) The operating surgeon can delegate discretionary postoperative activities**
- **Delegation if the other practitioner is supervised by the operating surgeon or an equivalently trained licensed allopathic or osteopathic physician or a physician practicing within a Board approved postgraduate training program.**

Wrong-Site Surgery 2004-20012

Causes and Remedies Reported by JCAHO

- Leadership
- Communication
- Human Factors
- Information Management
- Operative Care
- Assessment
- Physical Environment
- Patient Rights
- Anesthesia Care
- Continuum of Care

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Most Common Misdiagnosed Conditions

- Inappropriate prescribing of opioids in patients in whom there have been misdiagnosis or failure to diagnose addiction, psychiatric conditions and diversion.
- Failure or delay in diagnosing cancer.
- Wrong-site/patient surgery.
- Surgical complications/errors.
- Failure to accurately diagnose cardiac and abdominal conditions.

Root Cause Analysis

Joint Commission Requirement for Sentinel Event

- Sentinel Event - unexpected occurrence - death or serious physical or psychological injury, or the risk thereof.
- Sentinel Event and Error - not synonymous.
- Sentinel event may not be triggered by an error and an error may occur - not cause a sentinel event.
- RCA looks beyond immediate result - identifies chain of events/contributing factors that led to adverse event.

Root Cause Analysis

Joint Commission Requirement for Sentinel Event

- Focused framework to analyze errors, identify what , why, and prevention.
- “Why?” continually asked - in effort to identify most basic issues or contributing factor.
- Avoids the tendency of assigning individual blame.
- An RCA must be credible and thorough to be effective. The factors necessary for both elements are described in the table below.

Root Cause Analysis Must Be Credible and Thorough

Goal is to avoid the culture of blame.

To encourage open examination.

Foster patient safety

Revealing their medical errors: Why three doctors went public.

<http://m.amednews.com>

**“To err is human. To tell the world about the cases
when things went
wrong requires courage”**

National Patient Safety Goals 2015

- Correct patient- ID patient and surgeon
- Correct surgery
- Correct site- marked pre-op
- Correct anatomical place
- Pause before surgery to assure correct patient, procedure and site.
- Hand cleaning guidelines from the CDC or WHO.
- Use proven guidelines to prevent infections that are difficult to treat.
- Use proven guidelines to prevent infection of the blood from central lines.
- Use proven guidelines to prevent infection after surgery.
- Use proven guidelines to prevent infections of the urinary tract that are caused by catheters.

Physician Leadership

Culture

Competence

Empathy

Humility

Principles

Policies

Procedures

Practices

Bottom Line

- Safety is everyone's concern
- Past events reviewed changes made
- Root Cause Analysis is in place and implemented.
- Messengers are rewarded not “shot”
- Protocols exist for various positions
- Procedures are established and agreed upon

Bottom Line

- All humans will error – it is part of human condition.
- We may not change the human condition.
- We cannot Name, Blame, Shame – does not work.*
- We can change conditions under which people work.

Disclosing Medical Errors

- Physician's duty to inform the patient of a medical error. Under Florida Statute 456.0575
- Practitioner must inform the patient, or the patient's legal representative, in person about adverse incidents that result in serious harm to the patient.
- Notification of outcomes of care that result in harm to the patient governed by the disclosure statute shall not constitute an acknowledgment of admission of liability, nor can such notification be introduced as evidence.

Adverse Incident Reporting

Florida Statute 395.0197(5) states:

(5) For purposes of reporting to the agency pursuant to this section, the term “adverse incident” means an event over which health care personnel could exercise control and which is associated in whole or in part with medical intervention, rather than the condition for which such intervention occurred, and which: (a) Results in one of the following injuries:

1. Death;
2. Brain or spinal damage;
3. Permanent disfigurement;
4. Fracture or dislocation of bones or joints;
5. Resulting limitation of neurological, physical, or sensory function which continues after discharge from the facility;
6. Any condition that required specialized medical attention or surgical intervention resulting from nonemergency medical intervention, other than an emergency medical condition, to which the patient has not given his or her informed consent;
or
7. Any condition that required the transfer of the patient, within or outside the facility, to a unit providing a more acute level of care due to the adverse incident, rather than the patient’s condition prior to the adverse incident.

“Second Victim”

- 250 physician suicides annually – double general population.
- Physician who believe they have made an error three time more likely to attempt suicide.
- Emotional turmoil even if right in presence of bad outcome.
- Multiple hospitals have developed outreach for physicians

“All men make mistakes, but a good man yields when he knows his course is wrong, and repairs the evil. The only crime is pride.” — Sophocles, Antigone”

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