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Toplines



HARVARD  
SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH

*Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health*

# ***Medical Errors: Practicing Physician and Public Views***

## **Methodology**

The Harvard School of Public Health and Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation's *Medical Errors: Practicing Physician and Public Views* is based on two surveys, one of physicians and one of the public, both designed and analyzed by a team of researchers from Harvard School of Public Health and the Kaiser Family Foundation.

### **Physician Survey**

The fieldwork for the survey of physicians was conducted April 24-July 22, 2002 by mail or online with 831 physicians by Harris Interactive, Inc. The sample was drawn from the national list of physicians provided by Medical Marketing Service, Inc. This list includes both American Medical Association members and non-members and is updated weekly. The margin of sampling error was +/-3.5 percentage points.

### **General Public Sample**

The fieldwork for the survey of the public was conducted by telephone April 11- June 11, 2002 with a nationally representative sample of 1,207 adults 18 years and older. The survey was conducted in Spanish and English by ICR/International Communications Research. The margin of sampling error was +/-2.6 percentage points.

Please note that for both surveys sampling error may be larger for other subgroups and that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in these or any other public opinion poll.

Please note, table percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5% are indicated by an asterisk (\*).

Copies of the survey toplines, the chartpack based on these results, and New England Journal of Medicine article based on these findings are available online at [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org) or by calling the Foundation's publications request line at 1-800-656-4533 (publication #3303).

**SURVEY OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

*Note: A \* following a question number indicates that there is a corresponding question in the physicians survey.*

- 1. Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the health care system in the U.S.?**

	SATISFIED			DISSATISFIED			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Somewhat	Very	
<b>Total</b>	53	15	39	45	23	22	2

- 1b.\* Thinking about everything that has to do with health care and medicine, what do you think are the two main problems facing health care and medicine in the United States today?**

	Total
<b>COST (NET)</b>	56
Cost of prescription/medicines	31
Cost of insurance/premiums	10
High cost/affordable healthcare/medical care/medical cost	22
Cost of dental insurance	*
The high cost of new technology	*
Doctor visits are too expensive/doctor fees/hospital stay is too expensive/doctors overcharge	5
Cost of medical procedures/tests	*
Cost of service(s)	*
Lack of money for research	1
Other cost	1
<b>MEDICAL CONDITIONS (NET)</b>	2
AIDS/HIV	1
Cancer	1
Substance abuse	*
Over weight/obesity	*
Other medical conditions	*
<b>MEDICAL ERRORS/INCOMPETENT DOCTORS/MISTAKES (NET)</b>	6
Poor training of health professionals/availability of good care/accuracy of diagnosis/doctors that are incompetent	4
Doctors/HMO's/RX making mistakes/lack of confidence	1
Doctors over prescribe pills/medicine	1
Doctors are too busy/lack of concern for patients/doctors limit their time with patients	5
People without access to insurance/people who don't have health insurance/health care/health care should be available to everyone	11
Lack of healthcare professionals (i.e. doctors, nurses, specialists etc....)	4
Malpractice/liability/too many lawsuits	3

Too much bureaucracy (too much paper work, red tape)	1
Government involved in healthcare	1
Nursing home shortage/inadequate	1
Better medical research/better research in medicines	1
Waiting too long to see the doctor/at the hospital	3
Not able to choose your own doctor/doctor you want is not available/having to change doctors due to the type of insurance you carry	2
Insurance company deciding what is covered/insurance doesn't cover enough/insurance trying to run the medical profession/insurance company deciding the rates/control of the medical field by the insurance companies	11
Elderly care/availability of medical care for seniors	4
Finding alternative medicine/cures for diseases	*
Preventive measures/medicine	*
People without health insurance don't get the treatment needed/inferior treatment	1
Health care system favors the poor/immigrants	1
Healthcare is greedy/corrupt/profit driven/too much like a business	3
Children's healthcare issues	*
Delays with approvals/referrals/billing	2
Lack of information/understanding (prescriptions, side effects, medical conditions, etc.)	1
Lack of universal health insurance/socialize medicine	1
Healthcare should be free	*
Lack of funding/government not having money	1
Fraudulent claims/insurance abuse	1
Quality/quality of healthcare is down	1
Doctors/facilities not accepting certain insurance	1
Inadequate/poor service	1
Management of the healthcare system/HMO/insurance	1
Availability of medication/approval of drugs	1
Have to see too many specialists/too many doctors specialize	*
Other	6
Nothing	4
Don't know	8

**1c. How familiar are you with the term “medical error”? Do you know what this term means; have you heard of it, but are not sure what it means; or have you never heard of the term “medical error” before?**

	<b>Know what term means</b>	<b>Heard of it, but not sure what term means</b>	<b>Never heard of term before</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Total</b>	31	28	40	*

Sometimes when people are ill and receive medical care, mistakes are made that result in serious harm, such as death, disability, or additional or prolonged treatment. These are called medical errors. Some of these errors are preventable, while others may not be.

I'd like to ask some questions about preventable medical errors that result in serious harm. If for any of these questions, you feel you haven't heard enough to have an opinion, just say so.

2.\* When people seek help from a health professional, how often do you think such preventable medical errors are made in their care? Would you say very often, somewhat often, not very often, or not often at all?

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't Know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not often at all	
<b>Total</b>	49	10	39	45	37	8	6

3.\* Which of the following do you think is the MORE important cause of preventable medical errors that result in serious harm?

	Mistakes made by individual health professionals	Mistakes made by institutions where they work	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	55	38	7

4.\* About how many Americans do you think die in hospitals each year as a result of a preventable medical error? (INTERVIEWER NOTE: Just your best guess)

	500	5,000	50,000	100,000	500,000 +	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	24	36	20	7	4	9

5.\* Realistically, about how many of these deaths do you think could have been prevented? (INTERVIEWER NOTE: Just your best guess)

	All of them	Three-quarters of them	Half of them	One-quarter of them	None of them	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	11	29	42	13	1	3

6.\* Thinking about preventable medical errors that result in serious harm, how often do you think patients are at least partially responsible for preventable medical errors made in their care? Would you say very often, somewhat often, not very often, or never?

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NEVER			Don't Know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Never	
<b>Total</b>	59	11	48	39	35	5	1

- 6a. Is what you know about preventable medical errors based mainly on your own experience, on experiences of your friends and family, or on what you have seen, heard, or read on television, on the radio, or in newspapers?

	Own experience	Experiences of your friends and family	Television, radio, newspapers	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	17	28	53	2

- 7.\* I'm going to read you a list of some things that could **CAUSE** preventable medical errors that result in serious harm to the patient. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is a very important cause, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all as a cause of these medical errors. If for any of these, you feel you haven't heard enough to have an opinion, just say so. Do you think (READ FIRST ITEM) is a very important cause, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all?

- a. Poor training of health professionals

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	79	54	25	18	13	5	3

- b. Overwork, stress, or fatigue of health professionals

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	95	70	25	5	3	1	1

- c. Not enough nurses in hospitals

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	89	65	24	9	6	3	3

- d. Uncaring health professionals

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	78	47	30	21	15	6	2

- e. Poor supervision of health professionals

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	82	50	32	14	11	3	4

**f. Health professionals not working together or not communicating as a team**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	92	67	25	6	5	1	2

**g. Doctors not having enough time with patients**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	94	72	22	5	3	2	1

**h. Poor handwriting by health professionals**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	79	48	31	18	14	4	3

**i. Medical care being very complicated**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	84	48	35	13	10	3	4

**j. The influence of HMOs and other managed care plans on treatment decisions**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	88	62	26	6	5	2	6

**k. Lack of computerized medical records**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	72	35	37	23	17	6	5

Now, I'd like to ask about some possible SOLUTIONS that have been proposed to prevent medical errors that result in serious harm, such as death, disability, or additional painful treatments for patients. Once again, if for any of these questions, you feel you haven't heard enough to have an opinion, just say so.

- 8.\* Please indicate how effective you think each one of the following would be in reducing preventable medical errors that result in serious harm. Do you think (READ FIRST ITEM) would be very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not effective at all?

**a. Better training of health professionals**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	92	73	19	6	5	2	2

**b. Increasing the number of hospital nurses**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	93	69	24	6	4	1	1

**c. Reducing the work hours of doctors in training to avoid fatigue**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	92	66	26	6	4	2	2

**d. Using ONLY doctors specially trained in intensive care medicine on intensive care units**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	91	73	18	5	4	1	4

**e. Including a pharmacist on hospital rounds when doctors review the progress of patients**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	75	40	34	20	14	6	5

**f. Giving doctors more time to spend with patients**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	96	78	18	3	2	1	1

**g. More use of computerized medical records**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	83	46	38	13	9	4	4

**h. More use of computers instead of paper records for ordering of drugs and medical tests**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	82	45	36	14	10	4	5

**i. Limiting certain high-risk medical procedures to hospitals that do a lot of these procedures**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	80	45	35	13	10	4	7

**j. Requiring hospitals to report all serious medical errors to a state agency**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	91	71	20	8	5	3	1

**k. Encouraging hospitals to voluntarily report serious medical errors to a state agency**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	84	62	22	13	8	5	3

**l. Having hospitalized patients be taken care of by hospital doctors rather than their regular doctors**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	52	16	36	41	28	13	7

**m. More lawsuits for malpractice**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	53	23	31	42	25	17	5

**n. Having a government agency fine health professionals who make medical errors**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	68	40	29	28	17	10	4

**o. Suspending the license of health professionals who make medical errors**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	82	50	32	13	10	3	5

**p. Requiring hospitals to develop systems to avoid medical errors**

	VERY/SOMEWHAT			NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL			Don't know
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not very	Not at all	
<b>Total</b>	93	74	19	5	3	1	3

**9.\* Should hospital reports of serious medical errors be confidential and only used to learn how to prevent future mistakes or should they also be released to the public?**

	Confidential (to be used to learn how to prevent future errors of this type)	Released to the public	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	34	62	4

10.\* Should physicians be required to tell patients if a preventable medical error resulting in serious harm is made in their care, or not?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Total	89	9	3

11.\* Suppose a patient needs a specialized medical procedure. This person can choose either a hospital that does a large number of these procedures, or a hospital that does not do as many. At which hospital do you think this patient would be more likely to have a preventable medical error made in their care, or wouldn't it make much difference?

	Error more likely at hospital that does a large number of the procedures	Error more likely at hospital that does not do as many	Wouldn't make much difference	Don't know
Total	23	49	26	3

Now, I am going to tell you about a medical case and get your opinion about it.

**VIGNETTE 1A – MEDICATION – GOOD OUTCOME**

*Asked of one half sample; n=603*

11a.\* A 67 year-old man goes to a hospital for surgery. He has an antibiotic drug allergy noted on his medical record. The surgeon does not notice the allergy and orders that antibiotic to be given at the end of surgery. A hospital nurse gives the patient the antibiotic. The patient wakes up with a rash all over. The mistake is noticed, the antibiotic is stopped, and the patient fully recovers.

**VIGNETTE 1B – MEDICATION – BAD OUTCOME**

*Asked of one half sample; n=604*

11b.\* A 67 year-old man goes to a hospital for surgery. He has an antibiotic drug allergy noted on his medical record. The surgeon does not notice the allergy and orders that antibiotic to be given at the end of surgery. A hospital nurse gives the patient the antibiotic. The patient wakes up with a rash all over and gasping for air. The mistake is noticed and the antibiotic is stopped, but the patient stops breathing. Despite every effort, the patient dies.

12.\* How much responsibility, if any, do you think (READ FIRST ITEM) has for this error? A lot, a little, or none?

*Either Outcome*

	RESPONSIBLE			None	Don't know
	Net	A lot	A little		
a. The surgeon	98	91	7	1	*
b. The nurse	84	50	34	15	1
c. The patient	36	13	23	62	1
d. The hospital	85	56	29	14	1

***Good Outcome; n=603***

	RESPONSIBLE			None	Don't know
	Net	A lot	A little		
a. The surgeon	99	89	9	1	*
b. The nurse	85	52	33	14	1
c. The patient	41	14	26	58	2
d. The hospital	83	55	27	16	1

***Bad Outcome; n=604***

	RESPONSIBLE			None	Don't know
	Net	A lot	A little		
a. The surgeon	98	92	5	2	*
b. The nurse	83	48	35	15	1
c. The patient	32	12	20	67	1
d. The hospital	87	57	31	12	1

*Asked of those who said surgeon was responsible for error*

**13.\* Do you think the surgeon should...(READ ITEM)?**

***Either Outcome; n=1186***

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	50	47	4
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	59	38	3
c. Have his or her license suspended, or not	37	58	5
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	97	3	1
e. Be required to get further education about this type of medical error, or not	82	17	1

***Good Outcome; n=594***

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	31	67	2
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	51	46	2
c. Have his or her license suspended, or not	23	73	4
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	97	3	*
e. Be required to get further education about this type of medical error, or not	81	18	1

***Bad Outcome; n=592***

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	70	25	5
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	67	30	3
c. Have his or her license suspended, or not	51	43	6
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	97	2	1
e. Be required to get further education about this type of medical error, or not	82	16	2

*Asked of those who said the nurse was responsible for error*

**14.\* Do you think the nurse should (READ ITEM)?**

***Either Outcome; n=1018***

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	19	78	3
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	32	65	3
c. Have his or her license suspended, or not	21	76	3
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	74	25	1
e. Be required to get further education about this type of medical error, or not	82	17	1

***Good Outcome; n=512***

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	15	83	2
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	30	69	1
c. Have his or her license suspended, or not	13	85	2
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	79	21	*
e. Be required to get further education about this type of medical error, or not	78	22	*

***Bad Outcome; n=506***

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	25	72	4
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	34	61	5
c. Have his or her license suspended, or not	30	65	5
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	69	30	1
e. Be required to get further education about this type of medical error, or not	86	13	1

*Asked of those who said the hospital was responsible for error*  
**15.\* Do you think the hospital should (READ ITEM)?**

***Either Outcome; n=1025***

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	39	57	4
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	52	44	4
c. Lose its accreditation or not	15	80	4
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	95	5	*
e. Be required to develop systems to avoid similar errors in the future, or not	96	4	*

***Good Outcome; n=497***

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	26	71	3
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	47	50	3
c. Lose its accreditation or not	13	84	3
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	94	6	*
e. Be required to develop systems to avoid similar errors in the future, or not	96	4	*

***Bad Outcome; n=528***

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
a. Be sued for malpractice, or not	51	43	6
b. Be fined by a government agency, or not	57	38	4
c. Lose its accreditation or not	18	77	6
d. Be required to report the error to (the patient/the patient's family), or not	96	4	*
e. Be required to develop systems to avoid similar errors in the future, or not	97	3	*

**On another subject...**

**15a. If a preventable medical error that resulted in serious harm were made in your care, how likely do you think the doctor would be to tell you?**

	<b>VERY/SOMEWHAT</b>			<b>NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL</b>			<b>Don't know</b>
	<b>Net</b>	<b>Very</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Not very</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	
<b>Total</b>	48	20	28	50	29	20	2

16.\* Have you ever been personally involved in a situation where a preventable medical error was made in YOUR OWN medical care or that of a FAMILY member?

	Yes	No	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	42	57	*

*Asked of those involved with a preventable medical error; n=528*

16a.\* Was the error made in your own care, your family member's care, or both?

	Your care	A family member's care	Both	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	25	60	14	*

### Q16/16a Combination Table

	Total
Involved in preventable medical error situation (net)	42
Only your care	11
Only family member's care	26
Both	6
Not involved in preventable medical error situation	57
Don't know	*

Now, please think about the error that occurred MOST RECENTLY.

*Asked of those involved with a preventable medical error; n=528*

17.\* Did the error have serious health consequences, minor health consequences, or no health consequences at all?

	Net	Serious health consequences	Minor health consequences	No health consequences	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	86	56	30	13	1

*Asked of those involved with a preventable medical error and had serious health consequences; n=303*

17a.\* Did these serious health consequences include any of the following?

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Severe pain	68	28	3
b. Significant loss of time at work, school, or other important life activities	71	27	1
c. Temporary disability	49	49	2
d. Long-term disability	47	51	2
e. Death (asked of those who had a family member who was involved in a medical error situation; n=250)	51	48	1

**Q16/17/17a Combination Table**

	<b>6/11/02</b>
Involved in preventable medical error situation (net)	42
Serious health consequences	24
Severe pain	16
Significant loss of work/school/life activity	17
Temporary disability	12
Long-term disability	11
Death	10
None of these consequences	*
Minor health consequences	13
No health consequences	5
Not involved in preventable medical error situation	57
Don't know	*

*Asked of those involved with a preventable medical error; n=528*

**18.\* How much responsibility, if any, do you think (READ FIRST ITEM) had for this medical error? A lot, a little, or none?**

	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>			<b>None</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
	<b>Net</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>A little</b>		
a. The doctors involved	91	81	10	8	1
b. The nurses involved	51	25	26	46	3
c. Other health professionals	50	26	24	46	4
d. The institutions involved, such as a hospital, clinic, or nursing home facility	68	43	26	30	2

*Asked of those involved with a preventable medical error; n=528*

**19.\* Did you or your family member sue the health care professional for malpractice, or not?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Total</b>	6	93	1

*Asked of those involved with a preventable medical error; n=528*

**20a.\* Did the doctor or the health professionals involved tell you that a medical error had been made in your or your family member's treatment, or didn't they tell you?**

	<b>Told you</b>	<b>Did not tell you</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Total</b>	30	68	2

*Asked of those involved with a preventable medical error; n=528*

**20b.\* Did the doctor or the health professionals involved apologize to you or your family member for the medical error that was made, or didn't they apologize?**

	Apologized	Did not apologize	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	33	62	5

**Demographics**

**52. Are you, yourself, now covered by any form of health insurance or health plan? This would include any private insurance plan through your employer or that you purchase yourself, as well as a government program like Medicare or Medicaid.**

	Yes	No	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	86	14	*

**55. Now thinking about your own health status...In general, would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?**

	Excellent/Very good/Good				Fair/Poor			Don't know
	Net	Excellent	Very good	Good	Net	Fair	Poor	
<b>Total</b>	82	20	38	25	18	13	5	*

**56. Does any disability, handicap, or chronic disease keep you from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities, or not?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	17	83	*

Now we have just a few more questions to help classify your answers.

**D01. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you currently registered to vote at your present address?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	73	27	*

**D02. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?**

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Something else	Don't Know
<b>Total</b>	28	33	23	11	5

**D03. Would you say your views in most political matters are liberal, moderate, or conservative?**

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Something else	Don't Know
<b>Total</b>	23	38	32	-	6

**D06. Are you currently married, living with a partner, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never married?**

	Currently married	Living w/ a partner	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never married	Don't Know
<b>Total</b>	53	6	8	11	3	20	*

**D07. Including yourself, how many adults, 18 or older, are there living in your household?**

	One	Two	Three	Four+	Don't know	Mean
<b>Total</b>	27	56	13	5	*	1.98

**D09. What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?**

	Total
High school graduate or less (NET)	53
Less than high school graduate (SUBNET)	17
None, or grade 1-8	4
High school incomplete	12
High school graduate + (SUBNET)	36
High school graduate	33
Business, technical/vocational school	3
Some college or more (NET)	47
Some college, no 4 year degree	23
College graduate + (SUBNET)	24
College graduate	14
Post-graduate training	9
Don't Know	*

**D10. What is your age?**

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Mean
<b>Total</b>	22	42	20	16	44.99

**D11. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Latin American background?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	10	90	-

*Asked of total Hispanics; n = 96*

**D11a. Are you White Hispanic or Black Hispanic**

	White	Black	Don't know
<b>Total</b>	79	9	12

*Asked of total non-Hispanics; n =1111*

**D12.\* Do you consider yourself to be white, black or African-American, Asian-American, or some other race?**

	White	Black/African-American	Asian-American	Some other race	Don't Know
<b>Total</b>	82	13	2	3	*

**RACE SUMMARY TABLE**

Non-Hispanic					Hispanic				
	White	Black/African-American	Asian-American	Some other race	Net	White	Black	Unspecified	Don't Know
<b>Total</b>	73	12	2	2	10	8	1	2	*

**D14. Is your total annual household income from all sources and before taxes:**

	<b>Total</b>
Less than \$40K (NET)	46
Less than \$15K	10
\$15K but less than \$20K	8
\$20K but less than \$25K	7
\$25K but less than \$30K	7
\$30K but less than \$40K	12
Less than \$40K (unspecified)	2
\$40K+ (NET)	52
\$40K but less than \$50K	13
\$50K but less than \$75K	17
\$75K but less than \$100K	10
\$100K+	9
\$40K+ (unspecified)	3
Don't Know	2

**D18. GENDER FROM OBSERVATION**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Total</b>	48	52

**D21. REGION**

	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>North Central</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Total</b>	19	23	36	22

**D22. METRO STATUS**

	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
<b>Total</b>	35	43	23

## SURVEY OF PHYSICIANS

**1. Thinking about everything that has to do with health care and medicine, what do you think are the two main problems facing health care and medicine in the United States today?**

a. Cost of healthcare (general)	27
b. Cost of medication/ prescriptions	13
c. Malpractice insurance costs/rates malpractice suits	29
d. Uninsured/underinsured/inadequate funding for uninsured	16
e. Access to/availability of medical care	19
f. Too much bureaucracy/paperwork/too little time with patients	8
g. Unreimbursed care/declining reimbursements	14
h. Managed care/ HMOs	11
i. Problems with insurance companies	22
j. Nursing shortage	4
k. Medical errors/ Poor education of doc./ quality of candidates/ patient safety	5
l. Lack of prevention focus: insufficient coverage for prevention	3
m. System inefficient/ too much end of life care	1
n. No evidence-based medicine/changing guidelines	1
o. Aging population	2
p. Unrealistic expectations of patients to healthcare entitlements	2
q. Physician shortages/lack of physicians	1
r. For-profit healthcare companies	2
s. Other	11
t. No Answer	-

### DEFINITION OF MEDICAL ERRORS

Sometimes when people are ill and receive medical care, mistakes are made that result in serious harm, such as death, disability, or additional or prolonged treatment. These are called medical errors. Some of these errors are preventable, while others may not be. The following questions are about preventable medical errors that result in serious harm.

**2. When people seek help from a health professional, how often do you think such preventable medical errors are made in their care?**

1 Very often    19 Somewhat often    59 Not very often    21 Not often at all    - No answer

**3. Which of the following do you think is the MORE important cause of preventable medical errors that result in serious harm? (Check one only.)**

- 55 Mistakes made by individual health professionals
- 43 Mistakes made by institutions where they work
- No answer

**4. About how many Americans, do you think, die in hospitals each year as a result of a preventable medical error? (Please provide your best estimate.)**

17 500    46 5,000    25 50,000    9 100,000    1 500,000 or more    1 No answer

**5. Realistically, about how many of these deaths do you think could have been prevented?**

**8** All of them      **27** Three-quarters of them      **41** Half of them      **21** One-quarter of them      **2** None of them      **1** No answer

**6. Thinking about preventable medical errors that result in serious harm, how often do you think patients are at least partially responsible for preventable medical errors made in their care?**

**10** Very often      **48** Somewhat often      **41** Not very often      **1** Never      - No answer

**7. Following is a list of some things that could CAUSE preventable medical errors that result in serious harm to the patient. For each one, please indicate how important you think it is as a cause of these preventable medical errors.**

	<u>Very Important</u> (1)	<u>Somewhat Important</u> (2)	<u>Not Very Important</u> (3)	<u>Not At All Important</u> (4)	<u>No Answer</u>
a) Poor training of health professionals	<b>28</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	-
b) Overwork, stress, or fatigue of health professionals	<b>50</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	-
c) Not enough nurses in hospitals	<b>53</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	-
d) Uncaring health professionals	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>20</b>	-
e) Poor supervision of health professionals	<b>16</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>6</b>	-
f) Health professionals not working together or not communicating as a team	<b>39</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	-
g) Doctors not having enough time with patients	<b>37</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	-
h) Poor handwriting by health professionals	<b>21</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	-
i) Medical care being very complicated	<b>38</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	-
j) The influence of HMOs and other managed care plans on treatment decisions	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	-
k) Lack of computerized medical records	<b>13</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	-

**8. Following is a list of some possible SOLUTIONS that have been proposed to prevent medical errors that result in serious harm. Please indicate how effective you think each one would be in reducing preventable medical errors.**

	<u>Very Effective</u> (1)	<u>Somewhat Effective</u> (2)	<u>Not Very Effective</u> (3)	<u>Not At All Effective</u> (4)	<u>No Answer</u>
a) Better training of health professionals	36	46	15	3	*
b) Increasing the number of hospital nurses	51	42	6	1	1
c) Reducing the work hours of doctors in training to avoid fatigue	33	46	19	2	1
d) Using only doctors specially trained in intensive care medicine on intensive care units	34	45	18	3	*
e) Including a pharmacist on hospital rounds when physicians review the progress of patients	20	43	30	7	*
f) Giving doctors more time to spend with patients	46	41	12	1	-
g) More use of computerized medical records	19	45	29	7	*
h) More use of computers instead of paper records for ordering of drugs and medical tests	23	44	27	6	*
i) Limiting certain high-risk medical procedures to hospitals that do a lot of these procedures	40	46	13	2	*
j) Requiring hospitals to report all serious medical errors to a state agency	23	36	31	10	*
k) Encouraging hospitals to voluntarily report serious medical errors to a state agency	21	34	34	11	*
l) Having hospitalized patients be taken care of by hospital doctors rather than their regular doctors	6	30	43	21	1
m) More lawsuits for malpractice	1	4	26	69	*
n) Having a government agency fine health professionals who make medical errors	2	10	33	56	*
o) Suspending the licenses of health professionals who make medical errors	3	15	43	39	*
p) Requiring hospitals to develop systems to avoid medical errors	55	36	7	2	-

**9. Should hospital reports of serious medical errors be confidential and only used to learn how to prevent future mistakes or should they also be released to the public?**

- 86 Confidential (only used to learn how to prevent future mistakes)
- 14 Also released to the public
- No answer

**10. Should physicians be required to tell patients if a preventable medical error resulting in serious harm is made in their care, or not?**

- 77 Yes
- 22 No
- No answer

**11. Suppose a patient needs a specialized medical procedure. This person can choose either a hospital that does a large number of these procedures or a hospital that does not do as many. At which hospital do you think this patient would be more likely to have a preventable medical error made in their care, or wouldn't it make much difference?**

- 4 Error more likely at hospital that does a large number of the procedures
- 71 Error more likely at hospital that does not do as many
- 24 Wouldn't make much difference
- No answer

**MEDICAL CASE - NEGATIVE OUTCOME**

Now, we'd like to ask your opinion about the following medical case:

A 67 year old man goes to a hospital for surgery. He has an antibiotic drug allergy noted on his medical record. The surgeon does not notice the allergy and orders the antibiotic to be given at the end of surgery. A hospital nurse gives the patient the antibiotic. The patient wakes up with a rash all over and gasping for air. The mistake is noticed and the antibiotic is stopped, but the patient stops breathing. Despite every effort, the patient dies.

**MEDICAL CASE - POSITIVE OUTCOME**

Now, we'd like to ask your opinion about the following medical case:

A 67 year old man goes to a hospital for surgery. He has an antibiotic drug allergy noted on his medical record. The surgeon does not notice the allergy and orders the antibiotic to be given at the end of surgery. A hospital nurse gives the patient the antibiotic. The patient wakes up with a rash all over. The mistake is noticed, the antibiotic is stopped, and the patient fully recovers.

**12. How much responsibility, if any, do you think each of the following has for this error?**

*Either Outcome*

	<u>A Lot</u> (1)	<u>A Little</u> (2)	<u>None</u> (3)	<u>No Answer</u>
a. The surgeon	93	7	1	-
b. The nurse	81	17	1	-
c. The patient	6	20	73	-
d. The hospital	45	38	17	-

**Good Outcome; n=405**

	<u>A Lot</u> (1)	<u>A Little</u> (2)	<u>None</u> (3)	<u>No Answer</u>
a. The surgeon	90	9	1	-
b. The nurse	81	19	1	-
c. The patient	6	24	71	-
d. The hospital	42	37	22	-

**Bad Outcome; n=426**

	<u>A Lot</u> (1)	<u>A Little</u> (2)	<u>None</u> (3)	<u>No Answer</u>
a. The surgeon	95	4	1	-
b. The nurse	82	16	2	-
c. The patient	7	16	76	-
d. The hospital	48	38	14	-

**Answered Q13 and Q14 if thought the SURGEON or NURSE has a lot or a little responsibility for the error.**

**13. Do you think the surgeon should...?**

**14. Do you think the nurse should...?**

***Either Outcome***

	Q13 Surgeon			Q14 Nurse		
	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	No <u>Answer</u>	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	No <u>Answer</u>
a) Be sued for malpractice	30	70	*	25	75	-
b) Be fined by a government agency	13	87	*	12	88	-
c) Have his or her license suspended	5	95	*	5	95	-
d) Be required to report the error to the patient's family	88	12	*	73	27	-
e) Be required to get further education about this type of medical error	72	28	*	77	23	-

***Good Outcome; Surgeon n=403, Nurse n=403***

	Q13 Surgeon			Q14 Nurse		
	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	No <u>Answer</u>	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	No <u>Answer</u>
a) Be sued for malpractice	4	96	*	3	97	-
b) Be fined by a government agency	5	95	*	6	94	-
c) Have his or her license suspended	1	99	*	1	99	-
d) Be required to report the error to the patient's family	85	14	*	75	25	-
e) Be required to get further education about this type of medical error	66	34	*	71	29	-

***Bad Outcome; Surgeon n=424, Nurse n=417***

	Q13 Surgeon			Q14 Nurse		
	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	No <u>Answer</u>	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	No <u>Answer</u>
a) Be sued for malpractice	55	45	*	45	55	-
b) Be fined by a government agency	21	79	*	19	82	-
c) Have his or her license suspended	8	92	*	8	92	-
d) Be required to report the error to the patient's family	90	10	*	71	29	-
e) Be required to get further education about this type of medical error	78	22	*	83	18	-

**Answered Q15 if thought the HOSPITAL has a lot or a little responsibility for the error.**

**15. Do you think this hospital should...?**

***Either Outcome***

	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	<u>No</u> <u>Answer</u>
a) Be sued for malpractice	22	78	*
b) Be fined by a government agency	18	82	*
c) Lose its accreditation	1	99	*
d) Be required to report the error to the patient's family	79	21	*
e) Be required to develop systems to avoid similar errors in the future	96	4	*

***Good Outcome; n=318***

	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	<u>No</u> <u>Answer</u>
a) Be sued for malpractice	22	78	*
b) Be fined by a government agency	18	82	*
c) Lose its accreditation	1	99	*
d) Be required to report the error to the patient's family	79	21	*
e) Be required to develop systems to avoid similar errors in the future	96	4	*

***Bad Outcome; n=368***

	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	<u>No</u> <u>Answer</u>
a) Be sued for malpractice	38	62	*
b) Be fined by a government agency	24	76	*
c) Lose its accreditation	1	98	*
d) Be required to report the error to the patient's family	82	18	*
e) Be required to develop systems to avoid similar errors in the future	97	3	*

**YOUR OWN OR YOUR FAMILY MEDICAL CARE**

16. Have you ever been personally involved in a situation where a preventable medical error was made in YOUR OWN medical care or that of a FAMILY member?

35 Yes

65 No

- No answer

*Answered Q16a to Q20 if a preventable medical error was made in OWN medical care OR that of a FAMILY member.*

16a. Was the error made in your own care, your family member's care, or both?

17	a) Own care
70	b) Family member's care
13	c) Both
1	No answer

Please answer the next several questions thinking about the error that occurred most recently.

17. Did the error result in...?

50 a) Serious health consequences

27 b) Minor health consequences

22 c) No health consequences at all

1 No answer

*Answered Q17a if a preventable medical error resulted in serious health consequences*

Q17a. Did these serious health consequences include any of the following?	<u>Yes</u> (1)	<u>No</u> (2)	No <u>Answer</u>
a) Severe pain	58	42	-
b) Significant loss of time at work, school, or other important life activities	68	33	-
c) Temporary disability	46	54	-
d) Long-term disability	31	69	-
e) Death	38	62	-

**16/17/17a Combination Table**

<b>Experience with Medical Errors</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Serious Health Consequences</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Severe Pain</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Significant loss of work/school/life activity</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Temporary disability</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Long Term disability</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Death</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Minor health consequences</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>No Health Consequences</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Not involved in preventable medical error situation</b>	<b>65</b>

**18. How much responsibility, if any, do you think each of the following had for this medical error?**

	<u>A Lot</u> (1)	<u>A Little</u> (2)	<u>None</u> (3)	<u>No Answer</u>
a. The doctors involved	<b>70</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
b. The nurses involved	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3</b>
c. Other health professionals	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3</b>
d. The institutions involved, such as a hospital, clinic, or nursing home facility	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2</b>

**19. Did you or your family member sue the health care professional for malpractice, or not?**

**2** Yes      **97** No      **1** No answer

**20. Did the doctor or the health professionals involved ...**

**a. Tell you that a medical error had been made in your or your family member's treatment?**

**31** Yes      **68** No      **2** No answer

**b. Apologize to you or your family member for the medical error that was made?**

**34** Yes      **64** No      **2** No answer

**EXPERIENCE IN YOUR ROLE AS A PHYSICIAN**

21. Are any of the hospitals in which you practice or to which your patients are admitted, a major teaching hospital or academic health center?

48 Yes

51 No

1 No Answer

22. During the past year, in your role as a physician, have you seen a medical error that resulted in serious harm to a patient?

29 Yes

71 No

\* No answer

*Answered Q23-Q24 if in ROLE as a physician, respondent saw a medical error that resulted in serious harm to a patient.*

23. Thinking about the last time you saw such a medical error that resulted in serious harm, how much responsibility, if any, do you think each of the following had for that error?

	<u>A Lot</u> (1)	<u>A Little</u> (2)	<u>None</u> (3)	<u>No Answer</u>
a. Doctors involved in the patient's care	73	20	7	1
b. Nurses involved in the patient's care	42	32	26	*
c. Other health professionals	23	30	45	2
d. The institutions involved, such as a hospital, clinic, or nursing home facility	35	32	32	1

24. Thinking about the institution where this medical error occurred, how likely do you think it is that another error like this one will happen during the next year?

15 Very likely

45 Somewhat likely

31 Not very likely

9 Not at all likely

- No answer

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**25. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnic background?**

74 White Non-Hispanic      3 Black Non-Hispanic      3 Hispanic      17 Asian      3 Other      1 No answer

**26. Approximately how many beds are in the hospital in which you practice or to which the majority of your patients are admitted?**

15 0-100      25 101-250      24 251-350      20 351-500      14 501 and above      2 No answer

**27. Approximately how many hours do you spend in outpatient care per week?**

7 0-5      4 6-10      6 11-15      13 16-20      17 21-30      22 31-39      30 40 and above      2 No answer

**28. Approximately how many hours do you spend in inpatient care per week?**

36 0-5      17 6-10      12 11-15      10 16-20      10 21-30      4 31-39      10 40 and above      - No answer

**29. Have you ever been named in a malpractice suit?**

48 Yes      52 No      - No answer



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