

Medication errors involving patient-controlled analgesia.

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<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/medication-errors-involving-patient-controlled-analgesia>

The use of patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) is an important method to treat pain, but concerns about its [safety](#) and [device](#) selection have been raised. This study examined nearly 10,000 PCA-related medication errors submitted to [MEDMARX](#), a database that tracks medication information from participating hospitals. Investigators discovered that patient harm was associated with 6.5% of the errors, and the errors overall were reported across all phases of the medication process. The most common errors were related to improper dosage or quantity. An AHRQ WebM&M [commentary](#) discusses a case of a PCA overdose and the mechanisms to promote its safe use.