

Overstating inpatient deaths due to medical error erodes trust in healthcare and the patient safety movement.

February 16, 2022

Gunderson CG, Rodwin BA. Overstating inpatient deaths due to medical error erodes trust in healthcare and the patient safety movement. *J Hosp Med.* 2022;17(5):399-402. doi:10.1002/jhm.2768.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/overstating-inpatient-deaths-due-medical-error-erodes-trust-healthcare-and-patient-safety>

The Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report [*To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*](#) estimated that medical errors contributed to 44,000 to 98,000 deaths in the US. This commentary argues the estimates included in the IOM and other [studies](#) are [overestimated](#), and that patient safety advocates should shift the focus from estimating deaths due to medical error to preventing patient harm due to hospital-acquired infections, procedural complications, medication errors, and diagnostic errors