

# Death by Friendly Fire

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Stuff Happens! And People Die! It happens during times of war . . . it happens in and around our homes . . . it happens on the highways . . . and it happens in places where we seek assistance and care, and where we least expect it to happen. No one wants it to happen and what happens isn't planned, it just happens . . . and people die!

For example, statistics prove prescription drugs are **far deadlier than terrorism**. Bet you'd never hear that from your pharmacist.

America was rudely awakened to a new kind of danger on September 11, 2001. The events of that day left nearly 3,000 people dead. Many feel it was the most tragic day in US history. Four commercial jets crashed that day, but what if six jumbo jets crashed every day in the United States, claiming the lives of almost **784,000 people, every year**? That would certainly qualify as a massive tragedy, wouldn't it?

Well, forget about "what if." The tragedy is happening right now. Over three quarters of a million people actually do die in the United States, every year, although not from plane crashes. They die from something far more common and rarely perceived by the public as dangerous: *modern medicine*, "friendly fire," if you will.

According to the groundbreaking 2003 medical report, **Death by Medicine**, by Drs. Gary Null, Carolyn Dean, Martin Feldman, Debora Rasio and Dorothy Smith, **783,936** people in the United States die every year from conventional medicine mistakes. No one wanted this to happen, and no one really planned it that way, hopefully . . . it just happened, and people die! That's the equivalent of six jumbo jet crashes a day for an entire year! But where is the media attention for this tragedy? Where is the government support for stopping these medical mistakes before they happen?

According to the study led by Dr. Null, which involved a painstaking review of thousands of medical records, the United States spends \$282 billion every year on deaths due to medical mistakes, or iatrogenic deaths. Yes, there's even a word for it. The word means "*doctor-induced*," or "*caused by the doctor*." That figure is over EIGHT TIMES as much as the total budget for the Department of Homeland Security, but it's still a conservative estimate, because only a

fraction of medical errors are reported, according to the study. Actual medical mistakes are likely to be twenty times higher than the reported number, because doctors fear retaliation for those mistakes. The American public heads to the doctor's office or the hospital, time and again, oblivious of the alarming danger they're heading into. The public knows that medical errors occur, but they assume that errors are unusual, isolated events. Unfortunately, by accepting conventional medicine, patients voluntarily continue to walk, head-on, into the leading cause of death in America, "death by friendly fire."

According to a 1995 *U.S. Iatrogenic* report, (there's that word again) "Over a million patients are injured in U.S. hospitals each year, and approximately 280,000 die annually as a result of these injuries. Therefore, the iatrogenic (doctor-caused) death rate dwarfs the annual automobile accident mortality rate of 45,000, and accounts for more deaths than all other accidents combined." Remember, this report was issued 10 years ago, when America had 34 million fewer citizens, and drug company scandals like the Vioxx recall were yet to occur. Healthcare spending may exceed \$1.5 trillion dollars this year, in 2005.

Since Americans spend so much money on health care, they should be getting a good deal ... a high quality of care, right? Unfortunately, that's not the case. Of the 783,936 annual deaths due to conventional medical mistakes, about 106,000 are from prescription drugs, according to the Death by Medicine report. That also is a conservative number. Some experts estimate it should be more like 200,000, because of under reported cases of adverse drug reactions.

Americans rely heavily on prescription drugs to fix their diseases. For every conceivable ailment "real or imagined," chances are there's a pricey prescription drug to "treat" it. Chances are even better that their drug of choice comes with an assortment of side effects. The problem is, prescription drugs don't treat diseases; they merely cover the symptoms. You need to understand, the overwhelming majority of US physicians provide *allopathic* health care. That is, they care for disease, not health.

So, anyway, the over-prescribing of drugs and medications is designed to treat disease instead of preventing it, and few in the medical profession would challenge that statement. So, the result is that people die unnecessarily because the underlying condition, or disease, has not been addressed. I call it "friendly fire." And because there are so many drugs available, unforeseen adverse drug reactions are all too common, which leads to the highly conservative annual prescription drug death rate of 106,000. Keep in mind that these numbers came before the Vioxx scandal, and Cox-2 inhibitor drugs could ultimately end up killing tens of thousands more. American medical patients

are getting the short end of a rather raw deal when it comes to prescription drugs. Medicine is a high-dollar, high profit, highly competitive and highly advertised business. But it really shouldn't be.

When pharmaceutical companies run their advertisements directly at consumers, they know these consumers are going to go to their doctor and ask for the drug by name, and this will result in a sale of that drug. That's exactly why drug advertising on television, in magazines, and so on, remains legal. It wasn't that long ago that it was illegal, but the FDA legalized it in 1997 in order to generate more profits for the drug companies that the FDA seems committed to protect, no matter what. Since then, the number of prescriptions and the drug industry profits have soared. Now, and this is really sad, we have more than 40 percent of the American population on prescription drugs, almost 120 MILLION people, many of them being children. God only knows how many prescriptions that represents, since most people take more than one, nearly all of which are medically unnecessary, and two-thirds of which are prescribed to cover up side-effects from previously written script.

The Death by Medicine report relates an experiment where researchers sent a group of people out into doctor's offices who told the doctor that they saw the drug, Paxil, in a TV ad. Chemically speaking, Paxil is Paroxetine Hydrochloride, and it's approved for treatment of depression, general and social anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder; but not for tummy aches or headaches, and it's best prescribed by a Psychotherapist, not a regular doctor, but then, that's just my opinion.

Many of these "patients" exhibited absolutely no signs of depression, but when they named the drug, when they said the word Paxil, amazingly, 50 percent were diagnosed as having depression, and 55 percent were given a prescription for the exact drug they named, Paxil. In fact, it turns out that when people named Paxil, they were more than five times as likely to be given a prescription for it than people who didn't name it. This simple experiment clearly demonstrates how many doctors are puppets of the pharmaceutical industry; **essentially they are glorified, respectable drug dealers!**

Medical doctors claim to be scientifically trained. They claim to be rational people. They say that everything's a formula, and that patients are only given prescriptions that are medically necessary. But, when a patient comes in and mentions the name of a drug, all of that rationality, and all of that so-called scientific training seem to go right out the window. Dr. Mull reports that, over half of the time the doctor is just going to write out a prescription for the exact drug the patient named, whether it is medically necessary, or not. In other words, the whole system of prescription drugs, and the use of doctors as

drug dealers, is largely a giant, costly confidence game.

Null's report cites the five most important aspects of health that modern medicine ignores in favor of the almighty dollar: stress; lack of exercise; high calorie intake; highly processed foods; and environmental toxin exposure. All of these things are putting Americans in such poor health that they run to the doctor for treatment. But instead of doctors treating the causes of their poor health, such as putting them on a strict diet and exercise regimen, they stuff them full of prescription drugs to cover their symptoms. In all fairness to them, it's really all they know to do . . . it's all they've been taught to do. However, by using this inherently faulty system of medical treatment, it should come as no surprise that so many Americans die from prescription drugs. They're not getting better; they're just popping drugs to make their symptoms temporarily go away. That's "friendly fire."

Now, believe it or not, many doctors are just as angry as the public should be -- charging that scientific medicine is "for sale" to the highest bidder " which, more often than not, end up being pharmaceutical companies. The pharmaceutical industry is a multi-trillion dollar business. Companies spend billions on advertising and promotions for prescription drugs. Who can remember the last time they watched television and were not bombarded with ads for pills treating everything from erectile dysfunction to sleeplessness? And who has been to a doctor's office or hospital and not seen every pen, notepad and post-it bearing the logo of some prescription drug?

Pharmaceutical companies claim their drug ads are "educational" to the public. The public trusts the FDA to review all of the ads and only allow the safest and most effective drug ads to reach the public, in spite of the plethora of side effects listed by the commercial's own narrator, ranging from diarrhea to death. As an example, Paxil's side-effects include nausea, injury, infection, diarrhea, constipation, decreased appetite, sleepiness, dizziness, tremor, yawning, sweating, abnormal vision and sexual side effects. Makes you want to run out and get some, right? Still, people feel they're safe, otherwise the drug companies wouldn't have been allowed to advertise the product.

It's a clever system: with this advertising, pharmaceutical companies influence the public to ask their physicians to prescribe them certain drugs, and the doctors acquiesce in their patient's requests. Everyone's happy, right? Not quite, since the prescription drug toll just continues to rise. It's just "friendly fire?" But advertising isn't the only tool the pharmaceutical industry uses to influence medicine. Dr. Null's study cites an ABC report that said pharmaceutical companies spend over two billion dollars, sending doctors to more than 314,000 events every year. Let's be honest, while doctors are riding

the dollar of pharmaceutical companies, enjoying all the many perks of these "events," how likely are they to question the validity of drug companies, or their products?

Again, some doctors are downright angry at the situation, and they're angry on behalf of an unaware public. Face it, major conflicts of interest exist among the American public, the medical community, and the pharmaceutical industry. And although the public suffers the most from this conflict, it is the least informed. The public gets the short end of the stick and they don't even know it. That's why the pharmaceutical industry remains a multi-trillion dollar business. Prescription drugs are only a part of the US health care system's miserable failings. In fact, outpatient deaths, bedsores deaths and malnutrition deaths each account for higher death rates than adverse drug reactions. The problems run deep and cannot be remedied without drastic, widespread change in the system's money and ethics.

Money is the main reason that the medical industry is not at all inclined to change. Prescribing more drugs and recommending more surgeries means more profits. Getting more drugs approved by the FDA, regardless of their safety, means more money for the pharmaceutical industry. As the healthcare system stands today, physicians and drug companies can't seem to pass up earning loads of money, even if every year a few hundred thousand people lose their lives in the process, from "friendly fire."

Even in drastic cases of deadly drugs, everyone involved has a scapegoat: drug companies can blame the FDA for approving their product, and the doctors for over-prescribing it, and doctors can blame the patients for demanding it and not properly weighing the risks. No one is to blame for "friendly fire," right?

What ultimately arises is a question of ethics. In layman's terms, ethics are the rules or moral guidelines that govern the conduct of people or professions. Some ethics are ingrained from childhood, but some are specifically set forth by the profession. For example, nearly all medical schools have their new doctors take a modern form of the Hippocratic Oath. While few versions are identical, none include setting aside proper medical care in favor of money making practices. On the research side of the issue, "Death by Medicine" cites an ABC report that says clinical trials funded by pharmaceutical companies show a 90 percent chance that a drug will be perceived as effective, whereas clinical trials not funded by drug companies show only a 50 percent chance that a drug will be perceived as effective. "It appears that money cannot buy you love or happiness, but it can buy you any 'scientific' result you want," writes Null and his team of researchers.

Since the events of September 11, 2001, casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq have doubled the number of those who died in the Twin Towers and the Pentagon tragedies, but in that same period of time, 490,000 people have died from prescription drugs, not counting the Vioxx scandal. Again, those are conservative numbers.

But the scope of the "Death by Medicine" report is even wider. When they added unnecessary surgeries, bedsores and medical errors, the numbers exploded! Perhaps a little chunk of the homeland security money would be better spent on overhauling the corrupt US health care system which, after all, is the leading cause of death in America! I'm not suggesting that the events of 9/11 no longer pose a threat to our way of life, and I would never suggest that the people who died on that fateful day weren't horribly wronged by those events. But every day, more Americans face even more dangerous, more consequential things that are being falsely represented as safe and healthy, when, in reality, they are deadly. One mans prescription could be another man's terrorism!

The corruption in the pharmaceutical industry and in America's health care system poses a far greater threat to the health, safety and welfare of Americans today than any single threat, domestic or foreign. We're also in a chemical war right now, and we've been engaged in that war a lot longer than the 20 years we've been fighting the "war on terrorism." The chemical war has been declared on Americans by the pharmaceutical industry, and we need to deal honestly with both.

The best place to get an infectious disease is the hospital. Were you aware of that? Dr. Wm. Campbell Douglass II suggests three specific ways to reduce your risk of contracting a hospital-borne infection, should you ever really need to go to one...

1. Make sure everyone who touches you at the hospital - doctors, nurses, orderlies, X-ray technicians, or anyone else - has first washed their hands with soap and warm water. Now, if that means you need to speak up and ask them, so be it. You could come across as being "rude", but It isn't rude to protect your life, and you, or your insurance company is paying their bill.

2. Before admission, take a thorough shower with any good non-antibacterial soap.

3. Prior to any procedure, ask your doctor to perform a nose culture for *Staphylococcus*. Folks who carry Staph infections are more vulnerable to the mutated forms of the bacteria that are rampant in hospitals, today. Also, a

negative culture provides some baseline proof, should a hospital-borne Staph infection occur later.

Do these things, and recommend them to anyone you know who's going into a hospital. You'll be giving yourself as powerful an advantage as possible against the onslaught of potentially killer bacteria you're likely to face once you're located in a hospital bed. Of course, the best defense is to avoid the place altogether... Those who "pursue wellness" are far less likely to be sitting in a doctor's waiting room with other sick, often contagious people, or in a hospital emergency room, than those who utter those four, very dangerous words, "whatever you say doctor." Unfortunately, that's not always possible, but I encourage you not to submit your body to these risks if you aren't persuaded you really have to, and if you must take this chance at some point, follow the three precautions Dr. Douglass recommendeds.

But, be under no illusions: Your risk of coming home from the hospital with a deadly infection is many times greater than the 1,000-to-1 shot that certain state health departments would have you believe. My R.N. daughter, Cheryl, told me twenty years ago that any person admitted into a hospital, and later released without having contracted something they did not have when they were admitted, was just lucky. I believed her then, I now know she was right.

I believe that the simple admonition to, "Cleanse the body, nourish the body," could do more than any prescription drug to help millions of uninformed individuals who are trapped in a failing yet "friendly" health care system, escape to wellness. Fortunately, there are thousands of knowledgeable people who do not have a medical degree (and a few who do), who are committed to "the ways and means of above and beyond living." They do avoid most of the dangers of "friendly fire," and are willing to share what they have learned with others. Thank God for them.

The masses in America subject themselves to friendly fire every day, and this article discusses the results. THERE MUST BE A BETTER WAY! That way begins with you taking more responsibility for your own health, and by that I mean an informed and determined pursuit of wellness. Begin to address the issues that affect your life, including learning more about how to attain and maintain abundant health.

This particular article helps you to understand why Americans are constantly being lied to; why we can't seem to get the truth; why so many in the medical profession who may know how to do things the right way aren't sharing this information with their patients; and why millions are dying, unnecessarily, from "friendly fire," when the solutions are out there. Becoming healthier, and

avoiding most of the illnesses and diseases that most people fall prey to, isn't all that difficult, but you have to want it and be willing to make a few changes. Notice, I didn't say you had to spend a lot of extra money.

If you would rather become a survivor than a statistic, continue to consider the numerous articles on this website. You'll find more truth and helpful information than you could ever imagine, and plenty of solutions as well. Consider sharing this report with as many people as you can. They need to know, because their life is in the line of "friendly fire," also.