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Posted Jul 5, 2005 PT by Jessica Fraser



America was rudely awakened to a new kind of danger on September 11, 2001: Terrorism. The attacks that day left 2,996 people dead, including the

passengers on the four commercial airliners that were used as weapons. Many feel it was the most tragic day in U.S. history.

Four commercial jets crashed that day. But what if six jumbo jets crashed every day in the United States, claiming the lives of 783,936 people every year? That would certainly qualify as a massive tragedy, wouldn't it?

Well, forget "what if." The tragedy is happening right now. Over 750,000 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.

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. 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?

After 9/11, the White House gave rise to the Department of Homeland Security, designed to prevent terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. Since its inception, billions of dollars have been poured into it. The 2006 budget allots \$34.2 billion to the DHS, a number that has come down slightly from the \$37.7 billion budget of 2003.

According to the study led by Null, which involved a painstaking review of thousands of **medical records**, the United States spends \$282 billion annually on deaths due to medical mistakes, or iatrogenic deaths. And that's a conservative estimate; only a fraction of **medical errors** are reported, according to the study. Actual medical mistakes are likely to be 20 times higher than the reported number because **doctors** fear retaliation

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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 into the leading cause of death in America.

According to a 1995 U.S. iatrogenic report, "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 death rate dwarfs the annual automobile accident mortality rate of 45,000 and accounts for more deaths than all other accidents combined." 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. Today, [health care](#) comprises 15.5 percent of the United States' gross national product, with spending reaching \$1.4 trillion in 2004. [continues on page 2 ->](#)

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Public Citizen

The official website of Public Citizen (non-profit) and Dr. Sidney Wolfe Adams says: *'Public Citizen deserves high praise for doing the job the FDA refuses to do: calling for the removal of dangerous drugs from the marketplace. Join this organization. They deserve your support. I can't recommend them enough. Dr. Sidney Wolfe is a courageous defender of public health.'*

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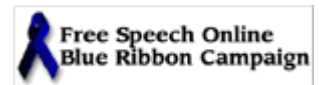
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