



# Hospital Risks: Perhaps July's Reputation Is Justified

Written On July 14, 2011 By [Bob Kraft](#)

Here's something to make you think twice about getting surgery this summer — hospital death rates apparently increase in July.

According to a brief article in the New York Times, a new study published this month in Annals of Internal Medicine seems to confirm the rumor that injuries and deaths suffered in hospitals increase each summer when new medical school graduates begin to treat patients. This phenomenon would normally be limited to “teaching” hospitals, where the graduates work first before later transferring to other hospitals. The new study shows that patient death rates in teaching hospitals increase by eight percent in July.

The study also reported longer hospital stays, more drawn-out procedures and higher hospital charges in July, “when 20 to 30 percent of the more experienced doctors-in-training leave and a class of newly minted doctors starts working at teaching hospitals.”

To quote the study's author, “It's like a football team in a high-stakes game, and in the middle of that final drive you bring out four or five players who never played in the pros before and don't know the playbook, and the players that remained get changed to positions they never played before, and they never practiced together. That's what happens in July.”

So, are you sure that surgery can't wait until September...?

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