



## The Price Tag of Medical Errors: \$19.5 Billion per Year in the U.S.

*Posted On: August 27, 2010 by [Patrick A. Malone](#)*

Medical errors and malpractice events cost the U.S. economy \$19.5 billion in 2008, according to a recently released study commissioned by the Society of Actuaries.

Of the approximately \$80 billion in costs associated with medical injuries, about 25% were the result of avoidable medical errors, the study says.

Lost productivity due to related short-term disability claims cost \$1.1 billion, while \$1.4 billion was lost due to increased death rates among individuals who experienced medical mistakes.

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The study also found that:

- There were 6.3 million measureable medical injuries in the U.S. in 2008; of the 6.3 million injuries, the SOA and Milliman estimate that 1.5 million were associated with a medical error.
- The average total cost per error was approximately \$13,000.
- In an inpatient setting, seven percent of admissions are estimated to result in some type of medical injury.
- The measurable medical errors resulted in more than 2,500 avoidable deaths and more than 10 million excess days missed from work due to short-term disability.

The study also identifies the 10 medical errors that are most costly to the U.S. economy each year. Approximately 55 percent of the total error costs were the result of five common errors:

- Pressure ulcers • Postoperative infections • Mechanical complications of devices, implants, or grafts
- Postlaminectomy syndrome -- back surgery • Excessive bleeding complicating a procedure

Source: [Fierce Healthcare](#)

To view the complete report, click [here](#).

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