



Dr. Dennis Perman ::

Message of The Week



200 Die Daily From Hospital Infections

April 21, 2014

Dear Doctor:

Those who follow this column know your humble scribe to be a passionate health and wellness advocate, focusing on chiropractic and things natural.

Each week, I aim to lift you up with an inspiring tale of Nature's wonders or some meaningful illustration of personal excellence, or get your blood boiling about the scandalous transgressions of those who abuse their power instead of helping people with it.

So, again this week, I bring you a story that shocked and infuriated me – that each and every day, two hundred lives are lost due to hospital infections.

MSN.com News reported on March 26, 2014 that 75,000 hospitalized patients die of healthcare-related infections every year, about fifteen times the number of American soldiers killed in Iraq since 2003. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC, said that many of these infections could be avoided if the healthcare workers improved their hand hygiene, a chilling thought.

The data, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, was compiled from 183 hospitals in 2011, and showed that about 721,800 infections occurred in 648,000 hospital patients, which caused over 200 deaths per day, shameful and horrifying. Pneumonia, surgical site infections, and organ or bloodstream infections were most common, often due to E. coli or staphylococcus, including MRSA.

Amazingly, these statistics represent an improvement over previous years – it's good that some changes are being instituted to address this needless waste of life, though the current conditions are still dismal.

Dr. Patrick Conway, chief medical officer at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), said that the US is "making progress in preventing healthcare-associated infections."

He said the gains come from three main mechanisms, including financial incentives, performance measures and public reporting to improve transparency, and increased use of interventions that have proven effective.

This is the part where I start to go ballistic. It's bad enough that carelessness and lack of commitment causes so much damage and costs so much life. But then, according to Dr. Conway's experience, the way to get them to reduce unnecessary death from infection is to apply money leverage, threaten to disclose their poor results unless they change, and insist that they upgrade their procedures?

Really? Where's the part about better service consciousness, pride in one's work and proper standards, with self-correction when necessary? Isn't that a reasonable expectation in a professional setting?

Even with some constructive movement, it's unlikely that hospitals will be able to clean up their act, especially given the dangerous high risk procedures they do. Better, let's spread our message of health, wellness and personal responsibility, and take the pressure off the hospitals by keeping people out of them.

Dennis Perman DC,
for The Masters Circle

PS - Don't miss Dr. Bob Hoffman's new boot camp, "The New Chiropractic Manifesto," where he interviews seven top chiropractic neurologists to uncover the direction of clinical chiropractic into the 21st century – exciting stuff, find out more at 800-451-4514, or email bob@themasterscircle.com.