

Study shows medication errors lead to child fatalities

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(Medical Xpress)—Serious errors administering drugs to children are occurring frequently due to workload, distraction and ineffective communication, according to a new study exploring the relationship between the nursing work environment and the administering of pediatric medication. The study showed negligence was rarely to blame in these incidents.

"Errors are occurring frequently and are ultimately devastating to children and their families," says Queen's researcher and study lead Kim Sears (Nursing). "The ramifications of an error are overwhelming and can have a profound impact on the nurse, patient and system."

Dr. Sears uncovered four [pediatric deaths](#) due to [medication errors](#) during the three-month study. The research was undertaken at randomly selected pediatric units from three Canadian university-affiliated hospitals.

She anonymously surveyed nurses at the three sites and they identified a heavy workload, [distraction](#) and poor communication for the errors. The [anonymous survey](#) showed 372 errors over three months, including 127 near misses, where the error was caught before the drug was administered, and 245 actual errors.

The most common error was giving children their medication at the wrong time, administering the wrong dose and giving patients the incorrect drug. Better-designed work spaces, improved communication

between staff and better training would help combat the problem, the study found.

The study was published in the *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*.

Provided by Queen's University

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