

# Making sense of drug safety science

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(Medical Xpress)—Why do drugs have side effects and what can be done about them? Making Sense of Drug Safety Science, a guide to answer these precise questions has been produced by Sense about Science, in collaboration with the MRC Centre for Drug Safety Science at the University of Liverpool. Launched on the 13 November 2013, it will feature on the NICE Medicines Prescribing alert service and explains all you need to know about drug side effects.

Drug-related [side effects](#), or Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR) events, in hospitals cost the NHS around £2bn per year and account for 15-18 per cent of hospital-based complications. Moreover around 30 per cent of all drug development failures are due to ADRs, posing a significant financial burden to pharmaceutical companies.

The MRC's investment in the Centre for Drug Safety Science seeks specifically to improve fundamental understanding of side effects by creating a collaborative environment between academia, industry and regulators, with the aim of improving health through the safety of medicines. As well as the MRC Centre for Drug Safety Science and UK-wide fellowship and grant schemes in [drug safety](#) science, other MRC investments include the MRC Toxicology Unit, Leicester, and the Integrative Toxicology Training Programme.

On-going priorities for the MRC in Drug Safety Science include stem cell-based approaches for drug safety testing and the 'Biomedical Catalyst'; this is an integrated translational programme, in collaboration with the Technology Strategy Board, to drive forward stratified medicine

approaches to better target drugs to patient subgroups, with the aim of improving safety and efficacy of treatments.

Welcoming the Making Sense of Drug Safety Science guide as a way to help demystify why side effects happen, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Dr Keith Ridge from the Department of Health said:

"We know that serious [drug](#) side effects are having an impact on which medicines we can use and how. We need to understand more about side effects and who will be at risk to use a wider number of existing drugs safely, develop new drugs more effectively, and allocate healthcare funds more efficiently."

Minister for Science and Universities, David Willetts, said:

"This guide provides an insight into how UK academia and industry partners are tackling the problem of side effects. It's important that we all understand that investment in this type of research plays such a significant role in minimising the risks presented by new drugs, as well as helping to get [new drugs](#) to the market and saving the NHS millions of pounds. This work has a global impact and I hope to see the MRC Centre for Drug Safety in Science continue to perform an important role in society for years to come."

**More information:** The guide is available here:  
[www.senseaboutscience.org/data ... e-of-Drug-Safety.pdf](http://www.senseaboutscience.org/data...e-of-Drug-Safety.pdf)

Provided by Medical Research Council

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