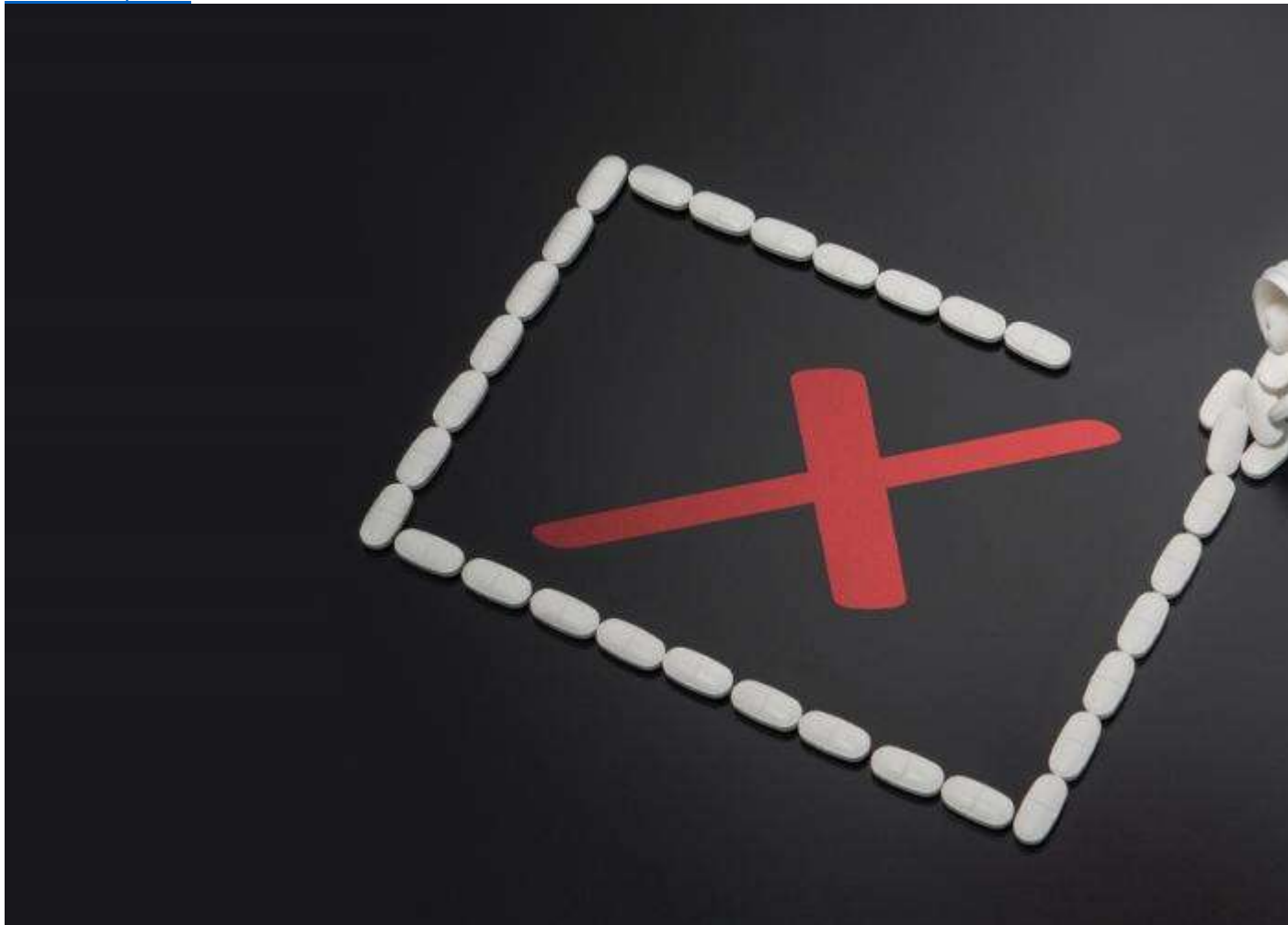


## June 2020 | 2020 | Five million drug errors kill or seriously harm Britons every year | June | 2020 | News

[www.wdty.com](http://www.wdty.com)



Researchers have identified 237 million medication errors that happen every year in England, and 2 percent of these—4.74 million—do serious harm to the patient, and a further 86 million errors are 'clinically significant', say researchers from the University of Manchester. Serious harm ranges from life-threatening adverse reactions to death.

Around 80 percent of deaths from the errors are the result of gastrointestinal bleeds from NSAIDs (non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs) such as aspirin and the blood-thinning agent, warfarin.

Similar rates of medication error are being reported in the US and in other European countries, the researchers say, and the problem has been acknowledged by the World Health Organization (WHO), which has set a target of halving medication errors by 2022.

The best-case scenario suggests the errors cost the UK'S National Health Service around £98m a year, and conservatively account for 1700 deaths a year, and the worst-case estimate puts annual deaths at 22,000 a year at a cost of £1.6bn.

Error rates in care homes are as high as 42 percent of all prescriptions being dispensed, and it's half as bad in hospitals, which have an average 20 percent error rate.

Errors occur throughout the dispensing process, with 54 percent happening in administration, 21 percent during prescribing, and 16 percent when dispensing the drug.

Around 72 percent of errors are minor, and probably don't harm the patient, but 26 percent—61 million—cause 'moderate harm' and 2 percent cause great harm, including death.

The drugs most likely to cause harm include the NSAIDs, clot-busters or antiplatelet drugs, anti-epilepsy medication, diabetes drugs to lower blood glucose levels, water tablets (diuretics), inhaled corticosteroids and some heart drugs, such as beta blockers.