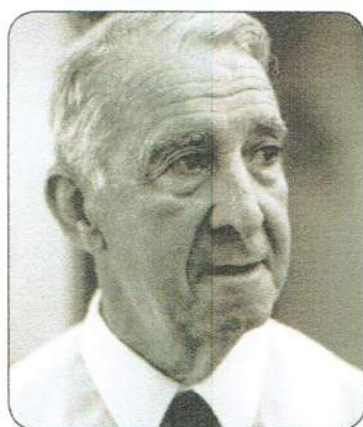


# WAYS TO DIE

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A nation's collective risk of doing business with medicine is its total annual iatrogenic toll.

The public domain medical literature and media report thousands of iatrogenic deaths each year. Most officially disappear, seemingly due to the act of substituting a non-iatrogenic cause of death on a death certificate, when in truth that certificate should bear some iatrogenic cause of death. Hence, the true magnitude of the iatrogenic toll is both unknowable and unknown.

There are perhaps only two meta-analyses of public domain medical literature about a nation's iatrogenic toll. Australia's iatrogenic toll was guesstimated to be 50,000 deaths annually<sup>i</sup>; implying that our iatrogenic toll is at least a leading cause of death. A second meta-analysis by Null et al found: "The total number of deaths caused by conventional medicine is an astounding 783,936 per year. It is now evident that the American medical system is the leading cause of death and injury in the US."<sup>ii</sup>

The global evidence based practise of medicine would have similar rates of harm in other countries. The 17 July 1999 edition of the BMJ states, "Studies in Australia, Israel, the United Kingdom and elsewhere suggest levels of error and hazard in patient care that are no lower than in America."

Australia's government data about cause of death should confirm the presence of iatrogenic epidemic.

Probably no government statistics have a greater requirement for truth than statistics about what kills citizens. Deception is rife in official statistics regarding avoidable deaths due to medical treatment – iatrogenic deaths – as distinct from the patient's disorder.

However, iatrogenic deaths are not subjected to forensic scrutiny and the complete and accurate data collection applied to murders, road and aircraft fatalities.

Our nation's data gathering body, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), receives and publishes the data about how many people die per year and what caused their deaths.

The image on the facing page, 'Ways to Die', is based upon ABS data and was published in Fairfax Media in December 2012. (The graphic is no longer available on the Fairfax website.)

Iatrogenic deaths, a leading cause of death, are missing from the graphic. To report the correct total number of deaths, thousands of iatrogenic deaths must have been misrepresented by substituting non-iatrogenic causes of death.

National governments fail to ensure that all iatrogenic deaths are precisely reported as such.

In July 2005, Australia's Office of the Safety and Quality Council confirmed, "There is currently no one body that correlates all information on rates of death due to treatment and in fact, there is no single source of statistics that provides an appropriate measure for safety and quality in Australia."

It is no accidental error that a nation's massive iatrogenic toll, as indicated in the public domain medical literature, is converted to an insignificant number. Nations including Australia which follow the World Health Organisation's (WHO) protocol cannot define their true total annual iatrogenic toll. This is how it is done:

1. WHO guidelines appear to permit substitution of cause of death from iatrogenic to non-iatrogenic causes on death certificates.
2. Substitution of cause of death on death certificates occurs prior to the nation's data gathering body receiving and publishing the data about how many people die per year and what caused their deaths.
3. The nation's data gathering body uses the WHO International Classification of Diseases which includes only two categories of iatrogenic harm.