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6 in every 100 patients die in hospital due to adverse drug reaction

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Six of every 100 patients who die in hospital do so as a consequence of an adverse drug reaction or, in other words, a fatal reaction to medicines. Those are the conclusions of a research carried out at the Department of Medicine of the [University of Granada](#), in collaboration with the Clinical Hospital San Cecilio of Granada, by Alfredo Jose Pardo Cabello and directed by Professors Emilio Puche Canas (Department of Pharmacology) and Francisco Javier Gomez Jimenez (Department of Medicine).

A adverse drug reaction to medicines (ADR) has been defined as any harmful and unwanted effect of a drug, at doses used for prophylaxis, diagnose or treatment. Their repercussion is usually minimal, but sometimes, they can be serious and they can even endanger the patient's life.

In order to carry out this work, they analysed the clinical case history of 289 patients older than 18 who died in hospital in 2004, revising their history, the drugs they were administered, as well as data about the treatment and the death certificate. Their analysis concluded that the most frequent ADR are the digestive haemorrhages followed by intra-cranial haemorrhages and cardiac arrhythmias.

The work carried out at the UGR has revealed that the drugs which provoked an ADR usually were AINE (medicines with a strong anti-inflammatory, analgesic and antipyretic effect) as well as platelet anti-aggregants, such as acetylsalicylic acid, two types of drugs frequently used in the daily medical practice.

Pardo Cabello has also proved the convenience of avoiding the mixing of gastro-damaging drugs such as NSAIDs, anti-aggregants and corticoids, as 53% of the deaths caused by ADR analyzed in this study had received a mixing of such medicines.

The author of this work has highlighted that, in the light of the obtained results, it is necessary to create a better awareness among the sanitary staff about adverse drug reactions and to be on the alert in the face of the slightest symptom. The research work carried out at the UGR is a completely pioneer in Spain and the results obtained coincide with those of other similar studies carried out in USA and Finland.

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