

HARVARD MEDICAL MALPRACTICE STUDY *(Summary & Conclusions)*

A study of medical malpractice in New York State, conducted by the Harvard Medical School, confirms that the incidence of malpractice is much larger than the incidence of claims. The investigators identified 16 adverse events for every claim paid. To quote the Study, "we do not now have a problem of too many claims; if anything, there are too few."

The study confirmed that:

1. There is a staggering crisis in health care quality in New York State;
2. The incidence of negligence is shocking;
3. Bad medical care is found more frequently at hospitals with a greater proportion of minority patients;
4. Patients over the age of 65 were found more likely to receive substandard care;
5. Many people never knew that they or their family members had been subjected to bad or incompetent medical services; and
6. Seriously injured patients gain almost nothing by filing a complaint with the Department of Health, which rarely responds or takes effective action

The Harvard Medical Practice Study defined an adverse event as an unintended injury caused by medical management. Using that definition the study concluded that in 1984, the last available data, more than 98,000 adverse events occurred in New York hospitals, causing 13,451 deaths. For further details about the Study, please see the address by Michael A. London, Esq., to the American Board of Trial Advocates in 1998, which provides further analyses of the Harvard Medical Practice Study in more detail.