



# Ankin Law Office LLC

Protecting the Rights of Injured Workers

162 W Grand Ave  
Chicago, Illinois 60654, United States  
Tel: 312-346-8780 or 800-442-6546  
Fax: 312-346-8781  
Email: [howard@ankinlaw.com](mailto:howard@ankinlaw.com)  
Website: [www.ankinlaw.com](http://www.ankinlaw.com)  
Blog: [www.thechicago-injury-lawyer.com](http://www.thechicago-injury-lawyer.com)

## New Study: Hospitals Need Better Follow Up On Test Results



We all know that doctors frequently order that medical tests be performed on their patients. Presumably, the results of the tests are important, because otherwise why else would the tests be ordered?

Unfortunately, to the detriment of patients, it appears that in many cases, the test results are simply ignored. In fact, according to a recent study, hospitals fail to follow up on up to 75% of tests ordered.

According to a recent USNews [article](#), the study results were obtained as follows:

Researchers analyzed 12 international studies and found that between 20 percent and 61 percent of inpatient test results, and between 1 percent and 75 percent of tests on emergency care patients, were not followed up after patients were discharged.

The [study was reported](#) in the Feb. 8th edition of the journal *BMJ Quality and Safety*. As explained in the study's results:

Two areas where problems were particularly evident were: critical test results and results for patients moving across healthcare settings. Systems used to manage follow-up of test results were varied and included paper-based, electronic and hybrid paper-and-electronic systems. Evidence of the effectiveness of electronic test management systems was limited.

After analyzing the findings, the study's authors concluded that "(t)here is evidence to suggest that the proportion of missed test results is a substantial problem, which impacts on patients' safety."

In other words, the failure to follow up on test results had a significant effect on the quality of care that was received by patients.

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Blog: [www.thechicago-injury-lawyer.com](http://www.thechicago-injury-lawyer.com)

Hopefully, based on the results of this study, hospitals will take steps to improve their procedures relating to test results follow up, thus avoiding the resulting [medical malpractice lawsuits](#) and giving patients the health care they deserve.

*Howard Ankin of Ankin Law Office LLC ([www.ankinlaw.com](http://www.ankinlaw.com)) handles [workers' compensation](#) and [personal injury cases](#). Mr. Ankin can be reached at (312) 346-8780 and [howard@ankinlaw.com](mailto:howard@ankinlaw.com).*

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