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Pediatricians update patient safety guidelines to reduce risk of malpractice to kids

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has revised its patient safety guidelines to reduce unintended harm to children by the healthcare system.

Noting that national awareness of patient safety risks has grown in this decade, Marlene Miller, MD, and AAP colleagues write in the June issue of *Pediatrics* that “the depth and breadth of harm incurred by the practice of medicine is still being defined as reports continue to uncover a variety of avoidable errors, from those that involve specific high-risk medications to those that are more generalizable, such as patient misidentification.”

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As technology evolves and medical advances become increasingly complex, the risk of causing unintentional medical harm has also increased, they write, pointing to studies that show seven failures to prevent a clinically important deterioration per 100 hospitalized children, 100 prescribing errors per 1000 children seen in an emergency room, and three preventable adverse drug events per 100 children seen in pediatric practices.

"The field of pediatric patient safety has matured much in recent years; there are now more robust epidemiology of errors for children, a deep understanding of the concept and measurement of a culture of safety, clear guidance on key elements of patient-safety solutions and introduction of successful pediatric patient-safety solutions," the article says.

"Nonetheless, continued work is needed to infuse these data and concepts into everyday pediatric practice for all clinicians, and special attention should be paid to the training of new clinicians to ensure that the future workforce can exercise all the tenets of pediatric patient safety as part of their everyday work life.

The new AAP patient safety recommendations aim to:

Expand efforts to educate clinicians, ensuring that they can all identify pediatric patient-safety issues and know how to improve them individually and within healthcare systems.

Create a safety culture by challenging all organizations, including small practices, to implement a pediatric patient safety plan that informs, supports and educates using appropriate local examples.

Develop patient-safety metrics for the ambulatory settings, where most children in the U.S. primarily interact with the healthcare system (though most patient safety work to date has been in hospitals).

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Develop and support broad-scale pediatric error-reporting systems and analysis of reported events.

Comply with proven best practices for improving pediatric patient safety to enhance pediatric healthcare outcomes.

Target drug safety by advocating for the development of effective and safe pediatric medications and formulations and for withdrawal of medications with unfavorable risk/benefit ratios.

Educate clinicians on strategies to reduce medication errors by ensuring that they maintain access to and proficiency in the use of a comprehensive and current pharmaceutical knowledge base.

Source: [Medscape](#)

You can read the full text of the AAP statement [here](#).

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