

Study: Nuclear medicine has low error rate

Given any procedure, non-invasive nuclear medicine has to be the preferred option.

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The United States Pharmacopeia, located in Rockville, Md., says the nation's nuclear medicine procedures produce low rates of error.

The USP is the official public standards-setting authority for prescription and over-the-counter medicines and healthcare products made and sold in the United States.

'The number of errors voluntarily reported for nuclear medicine in this comprehensive analysis -- resulting from environmental, situational or organizations factors -- is exceptionally low,' noted Society of Nuclear Medicine President Dr. Peter Conti, professor of radiology, clinical pharmacy and biomedical engineering at the University of Southern California-Los Angeles.

The USP's findings are part of its sixth annual report on medication errors reported to MEDMARX, its national medication error and adverse drug reaction reporting program, designed for use in hospitals and health systems.

The report indicates four nuclear medicine patients were affected by dispensing errors, but no patient suffered permanent injury.

Given the participant information in the report, 'the results would indicate that approximately 40 errors might be made in 20 million nuclear medicine procedures,' said Dr. Robert Henkin, former director of nuclear medicine at the Loyola University Medical Center and chairman of SNM's Committee on Health Care Policy and Practice.