

Readmission to another hospital may threaten patient safety, study says

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Canadian review found increased death rate compared to patients readmitted to same hospital within 30 days.

(HealthDay)—Patients released from one hospital and readmitted to another hospital within 30 days are more likely to die within a month than those readmitted to the same hospital, according to a large new study from Canada.

Researchers analyzed data from about 200,000 patients who were readmitted to one of 21 hospitals in Toronto and the surrounding area. About 20 percent were readmitted to a different [hospital](#) than the one they recently left.

The [death rates](#) after 30 days were 19 percent for those readmitted to the same hospital and 22 percent for those readmitted to a different hospital, the investigators found.

Patients readmitted to a different hospital tended to be older and to have more [health problems](#), but the increased risk of death remained after the researchers accounted for these factors, according to the study published May 1 in *CMAJ Open*.

While the study found an association between higher death rates for patients and readmission to a different hospital within a month after discharge, it did not prove a cause-and-effect relationship.

"One interpretation of these findings is that alternative-hospital readmission can compromise [patient safety](#)," lead author Dr. John Staples, from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Toronto, said in a journal news release.

"Yet it's also possible that these findings reflect the greater burden of illness among alternative-hospital patients, particularly if that burden of illness wasn't fully captured in the databases we used," he added.

The study also reveals how often readmitted [patients](#) do not return to the same hospital, the researchers said.

More information: The Joint Commission offers tips for [choosing a hospital](#).

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