



Wrong Dose for Heart Attack Patients

Heart attack patients often receive too high a dosage of blood thinning drugs in the emergency room, increasing the risk of serious bleeding. In cases of emergency, while giving dosages of such drugs, the patients age, body weight, gender, history of kidney problems, etc is often not taken into consideration. This problem was more common thin people, women, the elderly and those with kidney problems.

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Out of these people, about 15 percent have bleeding episodes which are caused due to over dosage which are pretty avoidable if an extra minute is taken into account to calculate the correct dosage based on age, gender, weight and kidney function.

Lead investigator Dr. Karen Alexander, Duke Clinical Research, said, "Our analysis, which includes patients treated in all types of hospitals across the country, shows that dosing errors occur more often in vulnerable patients, such as women, the elderly, or those with kidney insufficiency or low body weight."

She said, "In many cases they resort to standard dosing, which is appropriate for middle-aged men of normal body size and normal renal [kidney] function," she said. "But one size doesn't fit all. Certain calculations are required to make sure the doses are in the clinical range," she added.

"Physicians ought to take this into account," said Dr. Steven Nissen, a Cleveland Clinic cardiologist who was not involved with the research. "These drugs are not very forgiving."

A recent study regarding wrong drug dosage has been published in Journal of American Medical Association which shows that many US patients suffering from heart attack receive wrong drug dosage in the emergency room. According to the study, the low molecular weight heparin and drugs commonly

known as super aspirin are usually given as anti-clotting drugs to the heart attack patients. They are given within the first 24 hours to help open the arteries or to keep them open.

Since in case of emergency the first few minutes are very crucial, doctors tend to ask only the body weight and then they are give the recommended dose. This study has been carried out just to bring about awareness amongst the doctors so that an extra minute can save several lives.