

Dr. Martin Makary, M.D., a professor of surgery and public health at Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore reported, stated in a [CNN article](#) that catastrophic surgical errors are more common than the public thinks. The problem is commonly referred to as wrong patient wrong site surgery.

The findings arise from a study led by Dr. Philip Stahel, a surgeon at Denver Health Medical Center looking into common medical errors in Colorado hospitals. The errors in the database – some of which originated with other doctors or support staff, rather than surgeons – were caused by a range of slip-ups, including mixing up patient medical records, names, x-rays, and biopsy samples. All of the mistakes could be traced back to some form of miscommunication.

About one-fourth of those operations inflicted “significant harm” on a patient, according to the study’s investigators, as cited in an [Associated Press article](#). Dr. Stahel called the findings “shocking” in a [NYTIMES report](#) and was concerned that despite implementation of standards such incidences may be on the rise.