

## Injuries acquired in EU hospitals twice as deadly as smoking or cancer

### Herbal remedies and food supplements pose less risk than lightning or plane crash

The Alliance for Natural Health International (ANH-Intl), a UK-based, internationally active campaign organisation, today releases figures from official European Union (EU) sources showing that preventable injuries in hospitals pose the greatest danger to the lives of European Union (EU) citizens – more than twice the risk of either smoking or cancer.

At the same time, official data show that consumption of either food supplements or herbal remedies poses a risk of death that is, on average, over 90,000 times lower than that from adverse pharmaceutical drug reactions. In fact, the data released by ANH-Intl show that the risk of death from natural health products is less than the risk of death from a lightning strike or a plane crash.

Commenting on the findings, ANH-Intl executive and scientific director, Dr Robert Verkerk PhD, said, “A month ago we released data on the relative risks of death in the UK. The data released today cast the net wider, across the whole EU, relying almost entirely on official data from the European Commission and Eurostat. The research we commissioned shows clearly that EU legislation aiming to restrict public access to, and knowledge of, natural methods of healthcare simply cannot be justified on the basis of protecting public health. It reinforces the fact that regulators are expending energy in the wrong areas. They should be trying a lot harder to reduce unnecessary deaths from adverse drug reactions.”

The UK data released last month showed that preventable medical injuries picked up in UK hospitals were on a par with active military service in Iraq or Afghanistan for risk of death – and nearly 300,000 times as likely to cause death as ingesting food supplements.

“What surprises us the most about the EU data isn’t just that many of the same things appear in the highest categories of risk as in the UK – things like adverse reactions from pharmaceutical drugs and smoking, for example,” said Dr Verkerk. “It’s that preventable medical injuries in hospitals actually come out way ahead of everything else on an EU-wide basis. This is not about sick people dying in hospitals. These are deaths that could have been prevented in hospitals – they are deaths that are unnecessary. EU lawmakers need to be thinking a lot harder about how they can help make drugs and hospitals safer places before passing new laws, on grounds of consumer protection, that actually threaten public access to, and information about, the safest things we put into our bodies.”

**ENDS.**

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## NOTES FOR THE EDITOR

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Research for bubble charts and bar graphs performed by Ron Law, a New Zealand-based management consultant.

Link [<http://www.anh-europe.org/news/anh-exclusive-natural-health-products-ultra-safe-and-drugs-as-dangerous-as-war>] to previous release of UK data on relative risks.

Funding for this work provided by Neal's Yard Remedies ([www.nealsyardremedies.com](http://www.nealsyardremedies.com)).

Alliance for Natural Health International (ANH-Intl) is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to protecting and promoting natural and sustainable healthcare using the tools of 'good science' and 'good law'. It is an international alliance of consumers, practitioners, doctors, scientists and lawyers, as well as specialist natural health enterprises, all with a common goal of optimising human health using, as far as possible, approaches that work with, rather than against, nature. Since the organisation was founded by sustainability scientist, Robert Verkerk PhD in 2002, the organization has campaigned to protect the right of individuals to maintain their health through natural means. The World Health Organization (WHO), and other leading health authorities, have confirmed that the major burdens on healthcare systems the world over are now caused by largely preventable, chronic diseases, notably heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity and osteoporosis. In turn, scientific evidence is unequivocal that it is the nature and quality of an individual's diet, ample physical activity and appropriate lifestyle choices, rather than new drugs, that are central to reducing society's burden from these diseases.