



The U.S. health care system has scored a medical hat trick, reducing deaths, hospitalizations and costs, a new study shows.

Mortality rates among Medicare patients fell 16% from 1999 to 2013. That's equal to more than 300,000 fewer deaths a year in 2013 than in 1999, said cardiologist Harlan Krumholz, lead author of a new study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) and a professor at the Yale School of Medicine.

"It's a jaw-dropping finding," Krumholz said. "We didn't expect to see such a remarkable improvement over time."

Researchers based the study on records from more than 68 million patients in Medicare, the federal health insurance program for people age 65 and older.

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