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Adverse Drug Event Reporting
The article by Dongyi “Tony” Du and coauthors (May 2012) on how a 2007 law requiring publicity about a Food and Drug Administration hotline has slightly improved adverse event drug reporting by consumers was interesting. It shows that reporting by consumers can be helpful and can be improved.

But one hopes that in this age of e-mail, smart phones, and robocalls, a better, more proactive system could be developed to periodically contact patients (with their permission) by e-mail or robocall to ask for feedback about the new drugs they take. Patients could respond to several simple questions that would be electronically compiled. When the Food and Drug Administration detected an unusual number of negative comments, it would know it should dig deeper to see if they were valid early warnings of trouble.

It is way past time for the Food and Drug Administration to passively wait for calls on a hotline.

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