The authors argue that in the context of appropriate efforts to reduce medical errors by correcting problems in care-delivery systems, health care organizations have underemphasized individual responsibility. They propose punishing providers who repeatedly do not adhere to procedures for improving patient safety, such as hand washing.

Dr. Wachter reports having an equity interest and serving on advisory boards for Hoana Medical, Intellidot, and Doctor Evidence, serving on paid advisory boards for Google and Epocrates, receiving fees from QuantiaMD for helping to produce a Web-based series on patient safety and from the American Board of Internal Medicine for serving on its board of directors, and receiving funding under a contract from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality for editing two patient-safety Web sites and royalties from publishers from two books on patient safety. Dr. Pronovost reports receiving consulting fees from the Michigan Health and Hospital Association, the Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologists, the National Patient Safety Foundation, and the West Virginia Hospital Association.

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