**Friendly fire: A systematic review**

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**Background and aim:** Friendly fireoccurs when the military hit their own soldiers. This is a serious and common problem. The aim of this communication isto systematically review the medical literature on friendly fire, its causes and outcome.

**Methods:** All MEDLINE, PUBMED papers which were published in English on friendly fire, their causes, and effects on war victims were studied. Papers were critically appraised regarding their design and outcome.

**Results:** A total of 156 papers were found in the search. 24 relevant papers were critically appraised, 20 papers were relevant and included in this review. The term “friendly fire” needs to be more precise. It is replaced by “fratricide” injury by U.S. Army. About quarter of the American soldiers were killed by friendly fire in the Gulf war and 70% of these injuries were caused by ground-to-ground fire. Air-to-ground fire incidents have major impacts, especially if they hit hospitals. Those victims who had retained depleted uranium shrapnel fragments had long term effects on reduced bone mass. Friendly fire deaths remain high despite advances in technology. They can be caused by inexperience, lack of communication or coordination, lack of sleep, situational stress, or misidentification.

**Conclusions:**  Friendly fire is a human error, which is similar to medical errors, may have dramatic effects on the health care of war zones.