Yesterday, ACSH friend, Dr. David Seres, the head of nutritional medicine at New York Presbyterian Hospital, and three colleagues wrote a piece for the health blog in The Hill that would drive one crazy.

Dr. Seres, who has written in the past on hospital drug and nutrient shortages, discusses the importance of IV nutrients: It is estimated that more than 50,000 people receive parenteral (IV) nutrition at home, and more than 350,000 people per year receive it during a hospital stay. Patients have been kept alive for decades using this highly exacting technique.

But he is especially frustrated about a persistent problem: In the past five years, there has not been a single period of time that every component of this life-sustaining therapy has been available.

And, Dozens of reports of significant nutrient deficiencies and deaths have been published, and a large portion of the most recent issue of the Journal of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition has been dedicated to this severe and growing problem.

He is especially disgusted how hospital shortages are actually compounded by the supplements industry:

It is very concerning that the shortages in medications and nutrients required for treating very sick patients continue unabated. Further, without regulation, as [supplement makers] continue to ply their unproven and potentially harmful wares to an unsuspecting public, these vitamin infusion practitioners may compete with patients who are truly need them for a dwindling supply of these nutrients to sustain life.

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom, whose 2011 op-ed in the New York Post discussed some of the awful consequences of hospital shortages says, When I wrote the piece in 2011, there were shortages of 246 drugs. It is now more than three years later, and that number is 242. If this is progress, you'd better be prepared to be patient.

You can read Dr. Seres piece in its entirety here.