

Older anesthesiologists have higher litigation rates

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(HealthDay) -- Anesthesiologists over the age of 65 years have a higher frequency of litigation and greater severity of injury than their younger counterparts, according to an article published in the March issue of *Anesthesiology*.

Michael J. Tessler, M.D., of Jewish General Hospital in Montreal, and colleagues conducted a study using billing data for anesthesiology procedures performed in British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario by specialist anesthesiologists under the age of 51 years, those aged 51 to 64 years, and those over 65 years of age. These data were compared with information obtained from litigation complaints handled by the Canadian Medical Protective Association, in which [anesthesiology](#) procedures were deemed at least partially to blame.

Using the younger anesthesiologist group as the reference category, the researchers found that anesthesiologists aged 51 to 64 years had a litigation rate ratio of 1.15 (95 percent confidence interval [CI], 0.95 to 1.38) and those older than 65 years had a litigation rate ratio of 1.50 (95 percent CI, 1.11 to 2.03). Using disability weighted claims, the relative increase in disability was 1.31 for the 51- to 64-year-old group and 1.94 for the 65+ group.

"We found a higher frequency of litigation and a greater severity of injury in patients treated by [anesthesiologists](#) in the 65+ group. The reasons for these findings should become an active field of research," the authors write.

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