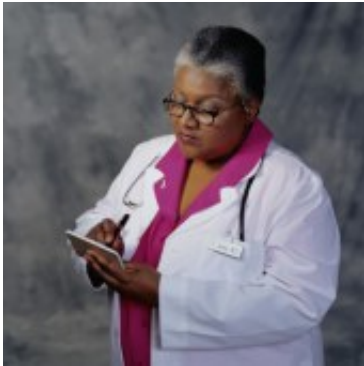


# Medical malpractice claims incur substantial defense costs

April 5 2012

---



(HealthDay) -- Defense costs for medical malpractice claims vary among specialties and are higher for claims that result in indemnity payments, according to a letter published in the April 5 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

To investigate the degree of variation in defense costs across specialties, Seth Seabury, Ph.D., from the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, Calif., and colleagues analyzed defense costs associated with 26,853 malpractice claims covered by a nationwide professional liability insurer, closed between 1995 and 2005, among 40,916 [physicians](#). Defense costs included factors directly linked with the cost of defending an individual claim, but not factors that could be spread across multiple claims.

The researchers found that the mean defense cost associated with claims was  $\$22,959 \pm 41,687$ . Significantly higher costs were seen for those claims in which an indemnity was paid ( $\$45,070$  versus  $\$17,130$ ). There was considerable variation across specialties, with the mean defense cost for a claim resulting in an indemnity ranging from  $\$83,056$  in cardiology and  $\$78,890$  in oncology to  $\$24,007$  in dermatology and  $\$23,780$  in ophthalmology. In all specialties, the mean defense costs were lower in cases that did not result in indemnity, with costs ranging from  $\$7,283$  in nephrology to  $\$25,073$  in gynecology.

"These findings show that although the costs of dispute resolution are higher for claims that result in indemnity payments, there is still a meaningful cost of resolving claims that never result in payment," the authors conclude.

**More information:** [Full Text](#)

Copyright © 2012 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Medical malpractice claims incur substantial defense costs (2012, April 5) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-04-medical-malpractice-incur-substantial-defense.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--