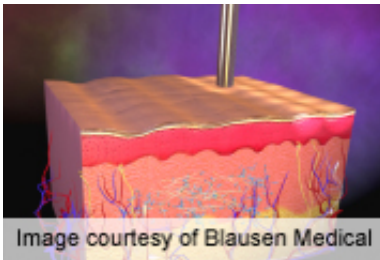


# Patients increasingly sue over botched laser hair removals

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(HealthDay)—Laser hair removal is the most commonly litigated cutaneous laser surgery procedure, with physicians being named as defendants even when not performing the procedure, according to research published in the February issue of *JAMA Dermatology*.

H. Ray Jalian, M.D., of Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues used a [national database](#) to identify 174 cases related to injury stemming from cutaneous [laser surgery](#) and determine the most common reasons for legal action, injuries, and claims.

The investigators found that [laser hair removal](#), particularly those procedures performed by nonphysician agents, was the most commonly

litigated procedure. During the study period from 1985 to 2012, the incidence of litigation related to laser surgery increased until it peaked in 2010. Physicians were commonly named as the defendant, even when they did not personally perform the procedure, and failure to obtain [informed consent](#) was the most frequently reported preventable cause of action. Of the 174 cases identified, 120 had public decisions, and 50.8 percent of these ruled in favor of the plaintiff, with an average judgment in the amount of \$380,719.

"Claims related to cutaneous laser surgery are increasing and result in indemnity payments that exceed the previously reported average across all medical specialties," the authors write. "Nonphysicians performing these procedures will be held to a standard of care corresponding to an individual with appropriate training; thus, physicians are ultimately responsible for the actions of their nonphysician agents."

One author disclosed serving as a consultant for Zeltiq [Aesthetics](#) and Unilever.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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