Women in Argentina sue for $54 mn over faulty implants

August 26 2013, by Josefa Suarez

About 300 women with faulty PIP breast implants have filed suit seeking $54.7 million in damages from three European companies, their attorney said Monday.

"We have filed a class-action suit against France's Poly Implant Protheses (PIP), Germany's TUV Rheinland (quality control) and German insurer Allianz," Virginia Luna told reporters, warning that the total damages sought could be vastly higher since some 15,000 women are believed to have been affected in Argentina alone.

"In one sample we did, with 500 women, 19 percent had breakage (in the implant) which allowed gel to migrate to underarms, neck and head areas, and even lungs," she said.

News of the faulty implants in 2011 sparked fears worldwide, but health officials in various countries have said the prosthetics were not toxic and did not increase the risk of breast cancer.

Doctors in France have removed PIP breast implants from more than 16,000 women and found a quarter of the scandal-tainted products had signs of splitting or leakage, a watchdog there said in June.

A total of 16,426 women have had the implants removed since investigators found the devices were twice as likely to rupture as rival brands, and that French manufacturer PIP used industrial silicone to fill them, the National Medicines Safety Agency (ANSM) said.

PIP founder Jean-Claude Mas, 73, has been charged with manslaughter and fraud. PIP's implants have been banned and the company, located in southern France, has been liquidated.

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