

Defensive medicine common among surgeons, radiologists

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(HealthDay)—Defensive medicine is commonly practiced among surgeons and radiologists in Austria, according to a study published online Jan. 6 in the *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*.

Michael Osti, M.D., from the Academic Hospital Feldkirch in Austria, and Johannes Steyrer, Ph.D., from the Vienna University of Economics and Business, surveyed orthopedic and [trauma surgeons](#) as well as radiologists from public hospitals to quantify the practice of [defensive medicine](#).

The researchers found that the prevalence of defensive medicine was 97.7 percent. More than one-quarter of all diagnostic examinations (28 percent) are ordered by orthopedic or trauma surgeons for defensive reasons (on average, 19.6 investigations per month for the average surgeon). Participants report receiving 1.4 liability claims per month.

The majority of doctors (81 percent) request additional diagnostic procedures for defensive purposes when treating high-risk patients. In radiology, the time spent on defensive practice is 9.2 hours per month, and among orthopedic and trauma surgeons, defensive practice equals 17 and 18 percent of total working time, respectively.

"Our results indicate the urgent necessity for confrontation with and solution for the increasing effort of self-protection within the health care system," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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