

Study examines trends in tracheotomy malpractice suits

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(HealthDay)—Malpractice litigation relating to complications from tracheotomies can result in high award amounts, especially in pediatric cases, according to a study published online Dec. 18 in *Head & Neck*.

Jeremy P. Farida, from Wayne State University in Detroit, and colleagues collected data on 43 jury verdicts and settlements from 1987 to 2013 relating to tracheotomies.

The researchers found that the median settlements and verdict awards were \$500,000 and \$2 million, respectively. Postoperative negligence was alleged in 81 percent of cases, intraoperative negligence in 27.9 percent, and permanent injury in 18.6 percent. Defendants were most frequently otolaryngologists (25.6 percent), followed by nurses. Pediatric

cases were more often named in favor of the plaintiff and had significantly higher awards.

"An awareness of tracheotomy malpractice litigation has the potential to both help physicians avoid future litigation and improve patient safety," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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