

Study examines malpractice litigation in peds ophthalmology

September 6 2016



(HealthDay)—In ophthalmology medical malpractice litigation, cases

involving pediatric versus adult patients are more likely to result in verdicts in favor of the plaintiff and have higher jury awards and indemnity payments, according to a study published online Sept. 1 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Stephanie B. Engelhard, from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and colleagues examined the causes and outcomes of [ophthalmology](#) medical [malpractice](#) litigation involving pediatric patients. The study included 68 ophthalmology malpractice [cases](#) involving plaintiffs younger than 18 years.

The researchers found that 51.5 percent of cases were resolved via [jury](#) trial. Of these, 48.6 percent had verdicts that were issued in favor of the plaintiff, compared with 28.8 percent in adult cases ($P = 0.01$). Of the verdicts in favor of the pediatric plaintiff, the mean injury award was \$4,815,693. Overall, a total of 13.2 percent of cases resulted in a settlement, with mean adjusted indemnities of \$1,912,738. In pediatric versus adult cases, jury awards were higher ($P = 0.002$), as were indemnity payments ($P = 0.003$). Verdicts in favor of the plaintiff were more likely in cases involving legal blindness ($P = 0.30$). In cases of litigation, common clinical scenarios included traumatic ocular injury, retinopathy of prematurity, and endophthalmitis.

"This information may give pediatric ophthalmologists insight into the situations and conditions that commonly lead to litigation," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)

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Citation: Study examines malpractice litigation in peds ophthalmology (2016, September 6)
retrieved 27 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-09-malpractice-litigation-peds-ophthalmology.html>

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