

I.Q. -- Interesting Quote

Editorial Staff

Obstetrician Study Reveals Secret of Malpractice

A 1994 survey of malpractice claims against Florida obstetricians during 1983-1986 revealed at least one important fact: malpractice claims are not random.¹ The authors found that: "Physicians who have been sued frequently are more often the objects of complaints about the interpersonal care they provide even by their patients who do not sue."

In summary, the study showed that those who have the greatest number of malpractice suits and the greatest amount of monetary awards against them are those MDs who don't communicate well. These are further comments made by the authors:

"These results support our hypothesis that the frequency with which physicians are sued is related in part to patients' satisfaction with interpersonal aspects of medical care.

"The message of this study, however, is that claiming does not appear to be random. Rather, many physicians who are sued frequently have problems communicating and establishing rapport with their patients.

"Addressing patients' concerns may not only decrease the incidence of malpractice litigation but is also desirable in and of itself."

Reference

1. Hickson GB et al. Obstetricians' prior malpractice experience and patients' satisfaction with care. JAMA 1994; 272: 1583-1587.

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