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## **Jury awards \$250,000 for erroneous cutting of hepatic duct**

A woman in Napa, Ca., has been awarded \$250,000 in a malpractice suit against the surgeon who removed her gallbladder and erroneously cut her hepatic duct. The verdict includes \$70,393 for past medical expenses and \$179,607 for pain and suffering.

According to court documents, while performing a laparoscopic cholecystectomy (gall bladder removal), the surgeon cut the hepatic duct instead of the cystic duct. The plaintiff's lawyers argued that the surgeon could have attempted to identify the correct duct before cutting it by taking an x-ray picture -- an intraoperative cholangiogram,

Patrick A. Malone  
Patrick Malone & Associates, P.C.  
1331 H Street N.W.  
Suite 902  
Washington, DC 20005

[pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com](mailto:pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com)  
[www.patrickmalonelaw.com](http://www.patrickmalonelaw.com)  
202-742-1500  
202-742-1515 (fax)

which many surgeons routinely perform in conjunction with laparoscopic cholecystectomies.

The surgeon argued unsuccessfully that the technique he used was not only within the standard of care, but was common and typical for surgeons with his training and experience with this procedure, and that injury to the hepatic (common bile) duct is a well-known potential complication of any gallbladder surgery. He also maintained that the patient's anatomy was abnormal, in that the cystic duct was adherent to and congruent with the hepatic duct, effectively mimicking the cystic duct.

Nearly 500,000 laparoscopic cholecystectomies (commonly referred to as lap choles) are performed in the U.S. every year. In 0.04% (200) of those cases, the common bile duct or the hepatic duct is improperly cut.

Source: [Napa Valley Register](#)

Footnote: Nearly all of the time, it is possible for the surgeon to identify the correct structure and cut the connection to the gallbladder. The hepatic duct delivers bile from the liver to the intestines, where it performs life-essential functions in breaking down fats in food.

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Patrick A. Malone  
Patrick Malone & Associates, P.C.  
1331 H Street N.W.  
Suite 902  
Washington, DC 20005

[pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com](mailto:pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com)  
[www.patrickmalonelaw.com](http://www.patrickmalonelaw.com)  
202-742-1500  
202-742-1515 (fax)