



Malpractice Lawsuits are Lengthy, but Physicians Often Prevail

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In a study released in May 2012, researchers found that physicians successfully defended most of the medical malpractice lawsuits against them. Researchers examined more than 10,000 malpractice claims across the United States from 2002 to 2005. Of those claims, about 55% resulted in a lawsuit. The courts dismissed over half of the lawsuits, and of the cases not dismissed, most were resolved before a trial verdict. Only 5% of the cases ended in a verdict. And 80% of those verdicts were in favor of physicians.

The study confirmed what many physicians already know—that although physicians are usually successful in their defense of malpractice claims, the cases often last a very long time. The study determined that lawsuits dismissed by the courts averaged more than 20 months in length and cases resolved before a verdict lasted about 28 months. Of course, the study found that cases that end in a trial verdict took the longest: about 39 months for defense verdicts and about 44 months if the patient won.

The full report from the study can be found here:

<http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1151587>