

# Breast CA diagnostic errors major cause of malpractice suits

February 5 2013

---



The most common reason for medical malpractice suits against radiologists in the United States is diagnostic errors, particularly breast cancer and non-vertebral and spinal fractures, according to research published in the February issue of *Radiology*.

(HealthDay)—The most common reason for medical malpractice suits against radiologists in the United States is diagnostic errors, particularly breast cancer and non-vertebral and spinal fractures, according to research published in the February issue of *Radiology*.

Jeremy S. Whang, M.D., of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-New Jersey Medical School in Newark, and colleagues used medical malpractice data for 8,401 radiologists in 47 states to determine the most frequent causes of malpractice suits.

Thirty-one percent of radiologists had a least one claim made over the course of their career and a cause could be derived for 4,043 of the

4,793 cases (84 percent). The researchers found that [diagnostic errors](#) were the most common reason for medical malpractice suits (14.83 claims per 1,000 person-years). Breast cancer, non-[spinal fractures](#), spinal fractures, lung cancer, and vascular disease were the most frequently missed diagnoses. Procedural complications (1.76 claims per 1,000 person-years) and inadequate communication with either the patient or referrer (0.40 and 0.71 claims per 1,000 person-years, respectively) were the next most frequent causes of medical malpractice suits against radiologists. Failing to recommend additional testing was a rare cause (0.41 claims per 1,000 person-years).

"Our data then indicate that interpretive errors, rather than communication errors, are by far the most common generic cause of malpractice suits against radiologists," the authors write. "In this category, [breast cancer](#) is the most frequently missed diagnosis, followed by non-[vertebral fractures](#) and spinal fractures."

One author disclosed [financial ties](#) to One Call Medical.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
[Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

[Health News](#) Copyright © 2013 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Breast CA diagnostic errors major cause of malpractice suits (2013, February 5) retrieved 21 July 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-02-breast-ca-diagnostic-errors-major.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--