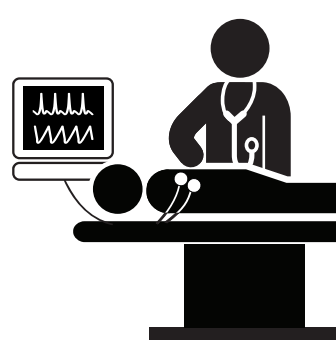


# CARDIOLOGY

## TOP PATIENT SAFETY RISKS

The practice of cardiology has underlying vulnerabilities that can put patients at risk of injury and can increase liability for cardiologists, as well as for doctors in other specialties who treat heart patients. Understanding the most common risks can help doctors enhance patient safety and mitigate factors that can lead to adverse events and lawsuits.



### WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON ALLEGATIONS MADE BY PATIENTS?

A study of 429 cardiology malpractice claims that closed from 2007–2013 revealed the five most common patient allegations.



- 25%** DIAGNOSIS RELATED (FAILURE, DELAY, WRONG)
- 14%** IMPROPER MANAGEMENT OF TREATMENT
- 12%** IMPROPER PERFORMANCE OF TREATMENT OR PROCEDURE
- 11%** IMPROPER PERFORMANCE OF SURGERY
- 6%** IMPROPER MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

### WHY DO ADVERSE EVENTS OCCUR?

A panel of expert physicians reviewed the 429 closed claims to identify the specific factors that contributed to patient injury.\*



**25%**  
PATIENT ASSESSMENT  
ISSUES

- Failure to establish a differential diagnosis.
- Failure to use available clinical information.
- Failure or delay in ordering diagnostic tests.
- Failure to address abnormal findings.



**21%**  
TECHNICAL  
PERFORMANCE

- Injury was a known complication.
- Poor technique.
- Misidentification of anatomical structure.



**20%**  
PATIENT  
FACTORS

- Nonadherence with treatment plan.
- Nonadherence with medication plan.
- Nonadherence with follow-up calls or appointments.



**18%**  
SELECTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF THERAPY

- Inappropriate surgical or other invasive procedure.
- Failure to order medication.
- Failure to use the most appropriate medication.



**15%**  
COMMUNICATION  
AMONG PROVIDERS

- Failure to communicate.
- Failure to review the medical record.
- Poor professional relationships/rapport.



**14%**  
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN  
PATIENT/FAMILY AND  
PROVIDER

- Inadequate patient education regarding risks of medications.
- Poor follow-up instructions.
- Poor rapport (includes unsympathetic response).

\*More than one factor can contribute to patient injury.

### RESOURCES FOR IMPROVING PATIENT SAFETY AND AVOIDING ADVERSE EVENTS



Visit [www.cardiosource.org](http://www.cardiosource.org) for a collection of evidence-based quality improvement recommendations from the American College of Cardiology. For more resources on avoiding claims, visit [www.thedoctors.com/patientsafety](http://www.thedoctors.com/patientsafety).