

EDITORIAL

Risk management for safe practice in Obstetrics and Gynecology

Obstetrics and Gynecology is associated with a high risk of medico-legal activity. The growing volume of litigation has given rise to concerns other than the cost of claims. In many countries, there is a concern about the effect of litigation in reducing the number of physicians willing to practice obstetrics and gynecology, which is a once popular specialty. There is also concern about the practice of defensive medicine, particularly as manifested in the growing cesarean section rate.

Risk management is the process of reducing or eliminating losses due to accident or misadventure. Therefore, it has become an integral part of the practice of obstetrics and gynecology. The identification and management of risk contributes to evidence-based clinical practice and produces the best outcome for the patient. A risk may affect the patient, the staff or the corporate organization resulting in harm to the health of the patients or staff, damage to the reputations of staff or the organization, and may have financial consequences.

In this issue, "Risk management in Obstetrics and Gynecology" provides information that addresses a number of the medico-legal and risk management issues encountered by obstetricians and gynecologists and other health care providers. The intent in highlighting these issues is to make all health care providers more aware of important opportunities they have to reduce the risks of injury to patients and others, reduce the risks of financial loss to the hospital and staff, and improve the quality of care.

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Editors