

February 2009

Dear Client,

Many of our medical malpractice cases involve victims who have suffered injury or death due to healthcare provider error. Often, these mistakes are the result of miscommunication between healthcare providers and their patients. In most instances, medical errors are avoidable, yet complications continue to arise because hospitals do not have proper systems in place to consistently prevent them.

In January, the *New England Journal of Medicine* released a study about a new practice that could help to greatly reduce surgical errors and complications. "A Surgical Safety Checklist to Reduce Morbidity and Mortality in a Global Population" studied the use of a surgical safety checklist that was designed to increase communication among surgical team members in order to reduce surgery-related deaths and other complications in patients. The study found that when surgery teams used the checklist, they were able to reduce surgical complications by 30% and deaths by almost 40%.

Each item on the checklist focuses on the necessity for constant communication during surgical care. The specific precautions on the checklist serve as reminders for the surgical team to verify patient identity, confirm the specific procedure taking place, ensure that prior tests were performed, and be aware of any of the patient's special medical conditions. As awareness surrounding the study grows, more and more hospitals will adopt this practice to help prevent complications and save lives.

Even as hospitals begin to focus their attention on the prevention of medical and surgical errors, problems still may occur. The next time that you or a loved one requires hospital care or treatment, we encourage you to communicate as much as possible with your healthcare providers. Talking with your doctors and frequently asking questions will help everyone involved gain thorough knowledge of the situation. Despite these efforts, if you believe that you have encountered injury or death as a result of medical/surgical error, please contact our office to discuss the facts of the incident.

The legal process is long and complex. Throughout this process, we constantly work to bring justice to you and hold all wrongdoers accountable. We are committed to achieving the best possible results for you in the shortest amount of time, while ensuring that justice is served and you are fairly compensated.

Please feel free to call or e-mail us anytime with questions.

Very truly yours,



Steven M. Levin and John J. Perconti