



Guide to urogynaecological conditions and negligent treatment claims

Common urogynaecological conditions and complications of treatment

Most **urogynaecological** conditions fall into one of two categories:

- **Incontinence**; and
- **Prolapse**

Incontinence

50% of **women** aged 45-54 are affected by **urinary incontinence**; of those, 30% have **stress incontinence** which is often linked to **coughing**, **sneezing** and **sudden involuntary movements**.

10% suffer from **urge incontinence** which gives **no control** over when and where they need to **urinate**. The remainder have both.

Prolapse

Prolapse of the **uterus** is another common problem affecting many **older women**.

Surgical Solutions

Surgery is often offered for **both conditions**, but the **success rate** for these procedures is **not** always **easy to predict** and **surgery** carries with it **risks of complications** for what are **normally uncomfortable** and **distressing**, but **benign conditions**.

These **problems** arise in an area of the **body** where **surgery** is **complicated** by the **proximity** of internal organs including the **bowel**, **bladder** and **ureter**.

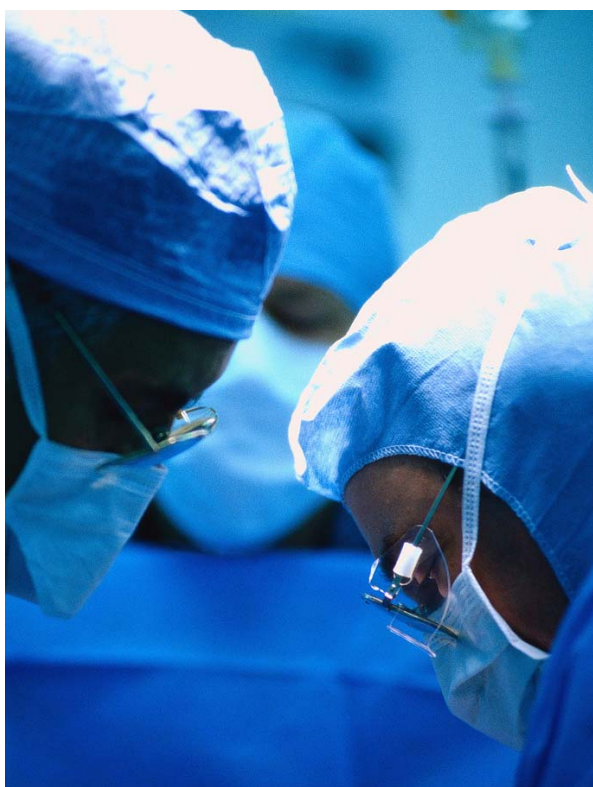
The **surgeon** operating in this area has to operate with a **high degree of skill**, but also a **clear awareness** of **complications** that may arise so that **steps** can be taken **immediately** to **remedy a problem**.

Surgery is often offered for **prolapse** but it carries with it **risks and potentially adverse effects** including the risk of **haemorrhage**, **infection**, **DVT** and **injury**, most commonly **perforation** during surgery to the **bladder**, **bowel** or **ureter**.

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Surgery for incontinence can sometimes worsen the condition or cause sexual problems that were not there before.

Surgery for these conditions has to be undertaken with great care given the complications, but it does not necessarily follow that if an operation has 'gone wrong' that there can be criticism of the surgeon or his/her team.



For example a surgeon who fails to detect or indeed look out for the signs that there has been a bladder perforation may well be criticised as it should be part of operating procedure to ensure that a common sign – blood in the urine after surgery - is detected. Alternatively there may be evidence that this was being monitored but that the signs of blood in the urine were not picked up on soon enough leading to a more complex outcome than might have been the case.

However, if a **doctor can establish** that they carried out **appropriate checks**, **detected** any **complication promptly** and **dealt** with it as **required** then **notwithstanding** any **problem** later this **may not give rise to a claim**.

Was the decision to operate correct?

Often after an **unsatisfactory operation**, or indeed **surgery** which has **resulted** in a **common complication** a **patient** will question whether an **operation was the right solution** for what is normally a **benign complaint** and effectively will **say** that they felt more **comfortable** with the **problems** that **pre existed the surgery**. The task of the **surgeon** when dealing with consent is to **balance** the **risks** and **benefits** of **surgery** to ensure that the **patient** is **fully aware** of what the **process** involves and the **difficulties** that may follow.

Highly skilled **surgeons** are fully **aware** of common **complications** and during and after **surgery** checks have to be performed to ensure that the **patient** is adequately **monitored**.

If any of the issues set out above have affected you or your family please contact us to see how we can help you.

This guide contains information on current legal issues applicable at the time of printing. Note there may have been changes subsequently which have not been incorporated in to the material. This guide is intended for information purposes only and its content should not be applied to any particular set of facts or relied upon without legal or other professional advice. For further information on how we can help you please contact:

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