Medico-legal problems in obstetrics

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Abstract
Obstetric practice is often perceived as a ‘risky business’ and obstetric litigation is on the increase in Western countries. Historically, it has been opined that the ‘malpractice rip-off’ began when the no-fault automobile accident law was passed in the US; this left many lawyers in a state of panic and they turned to medical malpractice to make a living, a move that ultimately paved way to ‘quick wealth’ and often left physicians devastated by patients’ ingratitude. Gynaecologists, like other healthcare professionals, have a legal obligation to adhere to a reasonable standard of care while acting in their professional capacity (the ‘duty of care’). A breach of this duty, whether due to proximate causes such as poor decision-making or to remote causes such as destitute safety culture in the organization, could lead to litigation. This review discusses the burden and causes of litigation in gynaecology and outlines the process taken by a medico-legal claim. Failure to diagnose, intra-operative complications, unnecessary surgery, consent issues, poor supervision and retention of foreign bodies are common causes. An illustrative case study is presented and some ways of reducing the risk of litigation are recommended.

Biography
El Akri Abdelhafid has completed his Ph.D. at the age of 25 years from Hassan II University and postdoctoral studies from Chu Ibn Roch University School of Medicine Morocco. He is preparing now a Master in Medicolegal evaluation from Montreal University Canada after getting a DESS in medico-legal evaluation from Montreal University. He has published more than 12 research papers in reputed journal.