

Accident and Emergency



The complexities of emergency treatment

An emergency department is a medical treatment facility specialising in emergency medicine and the acute care of patients who present without prior appointment. It is a high risk setting for errors that can inevitably result in avoidable patient harm.

Patients attend the A&E department day and night and present with a variety of complaints. Emergency physicians are required to care for multiple patients of different ages and with differing symptoms prioritising care of the most critically ill. It is an environment that requires many skills to include, quick thinking, a broad depth of knowledge of medical conditions and a wide range of skills to perform often lifesaving procedures.

Patients often present in circumstances where their medical records and their history is not known. The clinician will often not know what their medical condition is or what medications they are on. The patient may be unable to communicate important information. All of these factors significantly increase the risk of patient harm. A & E departments are also known to be overcrowded and sadly under staffed. It is also known that A & E departments are often staffed by very junior doctors. It is a high risk specialty.

Mistakes in the A&E department are inevitably made some of which may well be negligent and result from a lack of all appropriate skill or care.

A&E treatment delay and negligence can lead to serious injury or long-term disability

Diagnostic errors are commonplace in an Emergency care setting for example:

- Missed fractures and tendon injuries
- Incorrect medication prescribed
- Delayed treatment.
- Missed myocardial infarction.
- Misinterpretation of test results
- Failure to diagnose e.g. encephalitis, strokes, cauda equine, sepsis.
- Failure to recognise the severity of a patient's condition such as a head injury leading to wrongful discharge
- Failure to escalate treatment based upon a patient's condition.
- Failure to properly record assessment results

Any delay in diagnosis and in affording all appropriate treatment can result in serious injury and long-term disabilities. An adverse outcome could lead to a compensation claim.

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Claiming A&E compensation

Victims of medical negligence are often left suffering continued pain; they may require further medical treatment and are left worrying about the future for both themselves and their families. They may have suffered a loss of earnings and have significant care needs. They may require specialist interventions, therapies and support.

Clinical negligence compensation claims are designed to provide compensation to the victim for the physical and financial effects of their injuries. Damages if awarded will compensate for the injury and financial losses both past and future thereby meeting the costs of additional treatment, ongoing care, therapies and disability support along with any other financial losses. The aim being to put the victim back in the position they would have been but for the defendant's negligence so far as possible.

Support for patients affected by A&E negligence

At Lester Aldridge we are highly experienced in investigating accident and emergency claims and in taking forward successful compensation claims. We have access to a panel of medical experts who are leaders in their field.

We know how devastating a medical mistake can be. No amount of compensation can put things right but it can result in essential provision for the cost of care, to support both you and your loved ones and meet your immediate and ongoing needs. Our experienced specialist lawyers utilise their expertise to maximize any compensation award.

If you have suffered injury, following a mistake made in an emergency care setting we can assist with your claim.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact our Personal Injury lawyers. Contact us by emailing: online.enquiries@la-law.com or calling 0344 967 0791.

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