

Gynaecology and Obstetrics



The complexities of gynaecology and obstetric treatment

Gynaecology is the medical practice which deals with the health of the female reproductive systems and the breasts. It includes endocrinology, female urology and pelvic malignancy. Most consultants within this specialism will work in both obstetrics and gynaecology.

Gynaecologists undertake procedures, which include:

- Surgical interventions following miscarriage
- Treating abnormal bleeding and polyps
- Surgery for gynaecological cancers
- Performing minimal access surgery for problems including endometriosis
- Assisted reproduction (fertility treatment)

Obstetrics is the field of medicine, which concentrates on pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. During pregnancy and at the time of delivery most of the care for low risk mothers and uncomplicated deliveries is undertaken by midwives but approximately 35% of births are undertaken by an obstetrician, usually for more complex cases or in circumstances where a baby becomes distressed during labour. Typically this includes:

- Using instruments to assist delivery – including forceps or a ventouse (vacuum-assisted delivery)
- Performing caesarean sections, either as a planned or emergency procedure

Gynaecology and obstetric treatment to include delay and negligence can lead to serious injury or long term disability

In Gynaecology frequently medical negligence cases will arise where injuries have taken place during or as a result of the performance of surgery or at the time of diagnosis or treatment. Examples related to surgery include:

- Abdominal hysterectomy claims
- Bladder and bowel injuries e.g. incontinence following surgery
- Dilatation and curettage claims
- Laparoscopic investigations resulting in injury
- Pelvic floor repair claims
- Fistulas
- Failed sterilisation procedures
- Infection resulting in reduced fertility
- Lack of informed consent to gynaecological procedure
- Unnecessary hysterectomy following a caesarean section
- Uterus perforation during coil insertions
- Uterus injuries.

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In relation to diagnosis and treatment medical negligence claims may arise as a result of:

- Cervical smear tests errors
- Ectopic pregnancies errors
- Endometriosis claims
- Failure to diagnose cancer
- Fallopian tube ruptures
- Treatment of ovarian cysts
- Oophorectomy errors
- Perineal tear injuries
- Treatment of polycystic ovaries
- Side effects as a result of injected hormone contraception
- Surgical complications resulting in injury
- Termination errors

Obstetric negligence is one of the major causes of medical negligence litigation. The areas in which errors are made that frequently result in medical negligence claims include:

- Management before pregnancy, including, counselling, infertility advice and treatment
- Management during the pregnancy and before labour (antenatal), including:
 - consent issues
 - the interpretation of scans designed to detect abnormalities in the unborn child
 - delay in diagnosis and management of an ectopic pregnancy
 - failure to recognise and manage appropriately a high risk pregnancy, including pregnancy induced hypertension
- Management during labour and delivery (intrapartum), including:
 - interpretation of a cardiotocograph trace (CTG trace)
 - choice of the method of delivery, including the use of forceps;
 - technical performance of the delivery, which may result in avoidable harm to mother and/or baby
- Management immediately after delivery (postnatal) for example incorrectly sutured episiotomy

Errors in obstetric care can have a catastrophic outcome, with injuries being sustained by both mother and the baby, including cerebral palsy, brachial plexus injuries, shoulder dystocia, meconium aspiration syndrome, infections, Erb's palsy to give just a few examples.

Please see our [birth injuries](#) and [cerebral palsy](#) pages for further information.

Claiming 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 .

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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 gynaecology and obstetrics negligence

At Lester Aldridge we are highly experienced in investigating both gynaecology and obstetric negligence 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 by an Obstetrician or Gynaecologist 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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