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# \$4.2M Awarded to Woman Who Lost Leg After Knee Surgery

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A Philadelphia jury has awarded \$4.2 million to a woman whose left leg was amputated because of an infection she developed after double knee-replacement surgery at Temple University Hospital.

Plaintiff Annabelle Glasgow sued Temple University Hospital and its doctors, Dr. Easwaran Balasubramanian and Dr. Frederick P. Nissley. After a seven-day trial and several hours of deliberation, the jury in Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Rosalyn Robinson's courtroom found Balasubramanian 40 percent negligent, and Nissley and Temple 30 percent negligent each.

The \$4.2 million verdict was broken down into \$500,000 for past pain and suffering, \$1.36 million for future pain and suffering, \$127,000 for lost wages, \$82,000 for past care costs, and roughly \$2.13 million in future medical expenses.

According to the plaintiff's pretrial memorandum, Glasgow, a diabetic, came under Balasubramanian's care in 2009 after she complained of knee pain. Balasubramanian subsequently diagnosed her with degenerative arthritis in both knees, later confirmed by X-rays. He discussed knee replacement surgery with her, and scheduled it for Dec. 1, 2010.

Balasubramanian performed the surgery and afterward she was moved to a Temple rehabilitation center, under the care of Nissley. According to court papers, it was there that she began to develop drainage and a large blister in the area of the incision in her right leg, the signs of an infection. She was discharged from Temple on Dec. 22, 2010.

"Defendant Dr. Nissley as well as the other medical staff caring for Annabelle Glasgow failed to diagnose and treat Ms. Glasgow's MRSA [Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus] infection," court papers said. "Defendant Nissley also failed to obtain vascular studies to evaluate the adequacy of blood flow to her lower extremities."

Upon examination Jan. 31, 2011, open wounds on Glasgow's right leg and left heel were discovered. She underwent additional surgery to have her ulcers drained. She also had a skin graft on her right knee and a flap placed on her left leg followed by a subsequent skin graft.

By July 13, 2011, Glasgow had undergone three more surgeries to address her poor wound healing, including a procedure to have her knee hardware removed, according to court papers. On Aug. 24, 2011, Glasgow was advised that she may need an amputation of her left leg above the knee.

After it was determined that Glasgow's leg had inadequate blood flow to sufficiently heal, her leg was amputated.

"Dr. Balasubramanian scheduled plaintiff for bilateral knee-replacement surgery without advising plaintiff of the risks of the surgery such as losing her lower extremities and poor wound healing due to her history of diabetes," court papers said. "Defendant Dr. Balasubramanian also failed to order that Ms. Glasgow undergo vascular evaluation to determine whether she was suffering from arterial or venous insufficiency."

The plaintiff alleged Balasubramanian should have been aware that Glasgow's symptoms were consistent with an infection, and that Nissley was aware of those symptoms and discharged her anyway.

According to the defendants' pretrial memorandum, Glasgow fell while trying to go to the toilet by herself during her rehabilitation, resulting in a patella fracture. Additionally, the defendants claimed that Glasgow was using a heating pad on her feet, which the rehab staff considered not appropriate for her condition.

The defendants noted Glasgow spent time in a nursing home from April to May 2011. During that time, she developed a left-knee wound infection with pus draining from her exposed patella, court papers said.

In an expert opinion given by Dr. George Knod, included in the defendants' papers, Knod noted that Glasgow was noncompliant during her rehabilitation period in using footwear to keep pressure off her feet, specifically the heels, to prevent skin breakdown.

The defendants' attorney, J. Michael Doyle of Post & Schell in Philadelphia, did not return a call seeking comment.

Glasgow was represented by Philadelphia-based Messa & Associates. The case was tried by Messa attorney Irene McLafferty, who did not return a call seeking comment.

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