

Gadsby Wicks Clinical Negligence Casebook – gynaecological injury

File: Fourth degree tear during second stage of labour

Result: The claim settled in response to the Letter of Claim. January 2012.

Compensation awarded: £250,000 (General Damages £80,000 + Special Damages £170,000)

The Claim:

Alan Mendham, specialist medical negligence solicitor, pursued the claim on the basis that the labour was not adequately monitored and that, had the position of the baby and length of labour been properly monitored, Mrs Woodley's injury would have been avoided.

Case Summary

On 23 December 2009 Mrs Woodley was admitted at 38 weeks gestation to Hospital Q for the birth of her first child. During the course of the labour she was examined by midwives and a registrar and the position of the baby was inconsistently recorded as being occiput posterior or anterior. At 8.15pm, the lip of Mrs Woodley's cervix was pushed back and pushing commenced an hour later. A syntocinon infusion was commenced at 9.50pm. At 11pm, staff decided to carry out an instrumental delivery and this was achieved an hour and a half later. Mrs Woodley suffered a 4th degree tear and this was repaired by a consultant obstetrician.

On 25 December Mrs Woodley began to pass liquid faeces from her vagina; despite informing midwives of this, no doctor came to see her. It was not until three days later that a consultant saw Mrs Woodley and informed her that the repair may not have been complete and referred her to a colorectal surgeon.

She was left with a button hole tear and flatus incontinence and the repair needed to be deferred until Spring of 2011 to allow Mrs Woodley to care for her infant child before undergoing surgery which would leave her with a temporary colostomy.