

# Malpractice concerns affect dermatopathologist interpretive behavior

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(HealthDay)—Many dermatopathologists believe that malpractice

concerns may lead to additional testing in their evaluation of cutaneous melanocytic lesions, according to research published in the February issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.

Patricia A. Carney, Ph.D., of the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, and colleagues conducted a survey of dermatopathologists who interpret melanocytic skin lesions to assess how concerns about malpractice and experience with [malpractice lawsuits](#) influence their practice.

Two hundred seven (68.8 percent) of 301 dermatopathologists responded to the survey. The researchers found that 33 percent reported past experiences with malpractice. Factors significantly associated with being sued for malpractice included older age, lack of board certification or fellowship training in dermatopathology, and greater number of years spent interpreting melanocytic lesions. Despite the belief of most dermatopathologists that malpractice concerns made it more likely that they ordered specialized pathology tests, obtained recuts, and sought a second opinion, none of these practices were associated with past malpractice. Most dermatopathologists reported also having concerns about patient harms that could result from interpretations of melanocytic [lesions](#).

"The majority of dermatopathologists report that concerns about [malpractice](#) affect their interpretive behavior, especially for requesting second opinions and requesting additional slides be cut from the tissue block," the authors write.

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