



Letters to the editor
The Daily Mail
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Sir,

Re your story 4 July: £1.3bn NHS bill as no-win, no-fee lawyers cash in

Lawyers' costs in claims for medical blunders, according to the NHS Litigation Authority's annual report, actually fell last year by nearly seven per cent.

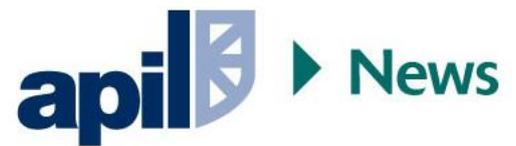
If the NHS were more speedy to acknowledge when it has acted negligently, costs could be cut even further as the need for protracted legal wrangling would be reduced.

Claimant lawyers, who operate on a 'no-win, no-fee' basis, have to spend a great amount of time assessing whether or not injured patients have a valid case and they are not paid for a vast amount of work which they undertake.

The Advisory Committee on Civil Costs, which looked into the cost of claims for clinical negligence, rightly concluded that rates charged by claimant solicitors "can potentially be explained by the additional costs which they necessarily incur".

And although the number of claims against the NHS increased last year, this increase doesn't appear to be out of kilter with the increase in the number of patient safety incidents.

According to the latest figures available from the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), there was an eight per cent increase in the number of adverse incidents between January and December last year. This compares to an increase of just six per cent in the number of claims brought against the NHS between April 2011 and March 2012.



Clearly, if the NHS wants to cut costs, it should focus more on preventing the negligence which causes needless injury. Not only would this help avoid the need for litigation, but it would reduce the number of patients who are unnecessarily injured in the first place.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Evans
Chief executive
Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL)