

Frozen Shoulder Case Summary

The plaintiff, age sixty, sought treatment of adhesive capsulitis in the right shoulder. In January 2001 the plaintiff underwent manipulation and debridement of the shoulder's glenohumeral joint. The procedure was performed by defendant surgeon and assisted by second defendant surgeon. During post-operative manipulation of the shoulder the plaintiff reported that the shoulder was popping out of its joint and becoming stuck in an unnatural position. The surgeon contended that physical therapy would resolve the shoulder's movement.

Several days later the plaintiff began a five-month-long, aggressive course of physical therapy, which was administered by the defendant physical therapy clinic. The plaintiff claimed that she had ongoing right-shoulder pain and in July 2001 another surgeon diagnosed the shoulder as dislocated. A total replacement of the shoulder was performed. The plaintiff claimed that the defendants failed to diagnose shoulder separation. The plaintiff claimed that the surgeon's post-operative manipulations dislocated the shoulder and contended that her complaints should have resulted in an x-ray being performed. The plaintiff claimed that the physical therapy staff should have recognized the shoulder dislocation and discontinued therapy. The surgeon contended that shoulder dislocation is a known risk of post-operative manipulations. The defendant physical therapy clinic claimed that the staff there merely followed therapy prescriptions given by the surgeon.

According to a published account a \$1.1 million pretrial settlement was reached. This included \$975,000 from the surgeon's insurer and \$125,000 from the physical therapy clinic's.

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