

Risk Management News

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Part 4: It's Time To Burn The Diplomas

On March 23, 1999, The New York Times reported the results of a study conducted by the University of Iowa, which seemed to indicate that those physicians with the most impressive credentials are the ones, in turn, most likely to get sued. Apparently, the Iowa study traced the histories of family physicians who practiced in Florida for a year or more between 1971 to 1994. Of these physicians, the ones sued most often were those who were board certified or who had received special citations or awards for professional competency. Also, it seems that male doctors were sued more frequently than female doctors. Also, physicians practicing in rural areas (go figure), were sued more frequently than those practicing in urban areas.

Of course, one conclusion we can come to, although a conclusion based on "gut reaction" rather than science, is that more skilled physicians sometimes end up with sicker patients, or at least, those patients whose symptomology may elude physicians with less developed skills. Sicker patients also may carry, on the whole, a higher probability of risk in their course of treatment, which might result in a higher frequency of claim risk to the treating physician.

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Burn Those Diplomas!

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