MDA National
Support Protect Promote

GPs in Focus
(Non-procedural)

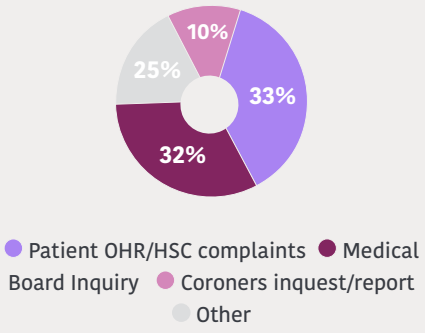
Incidents & Claims Insights | 1 Jan 2023 - 31 Dec 2024



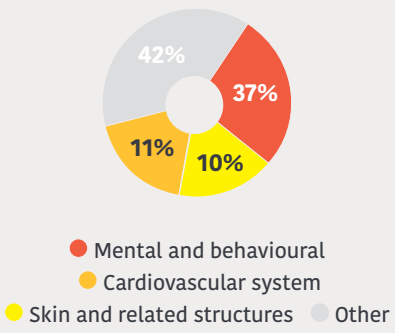
1 in 12

GP (non-procedural) Members notified MDA National of a medico-legal case in 2024, down from 1 in 10 in 2023.

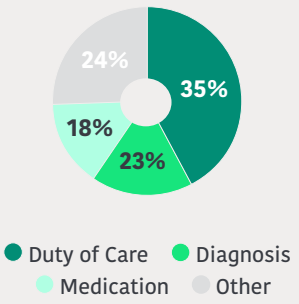
Top 3 Claim Types



Top 3 Injury Areas



Top 3 Incident Areas



Key Themes from MDA National Case Data

Delay in diagnosis allegations

23% of files opened were related to diagnoses, which include issues relating to alleged delays in diagnosis, missed results, or misdiagnosis. This highlights the need for accurate and clearly written records as often these are what will be relied on during an investigation.

Iron staining

It is essential to inform patients about the risk of permanent skin staining as part of the consent process for iron infusions. While some evidence suggests the staining may fade over time, it should be regarded as permanent and irreversible. Ensure patients have a clear understanding of the potential risks before proceeding with treatment.

Medicare investigations

Medicare runs a series of computer algorithms which measures each doctor against every other doctor in Australia. If you are above the 90th percentile for a specific item number or a statistical outlier, your profile may be reviewed under the Practitioner Review Program.

You need to be aware of item descriptors and the relevant explanatory notes for each item you bill. Your provider number is your responsibility, even if billing is entered by your practice staff on your behalf.

MDA National Support

Case Scenario*

The patient attended an appointment where they were scheduled for an iron infusion. The patient was given a generic consent form to sign. When the patient questioned the Member about the potential for staining, the Member advised that it has a low chance of occurring, and if it did, any stain would only be small. After there were initial issues attempting to flush the saline, the infusion began. The patient reported pain and pressure but the infusion was not stopped. It wasn't until the patient flagged their pain a second time that the nurse informed our Member. Rather than abandon the infusion, the flow rate was lowered until completion. Within 24 hours the patient had developed a stain and a range of other symptoms.

The patient brought a claim against the Member. MDA National assisted the Member with responding to the claim right through to resolution.

Some common themes we see are a failure to obtain and document fully informed consent, inadequate practice protocols, and failure to appropriately monitor the infusion. It is important to ensure that patients are properly consented and that appropriate practice protocols and staff training are in place for the administration and supervision of infusions. While consent forms can be helpful, they do not replace the need to ensure that patients understand the risks of proposed treatments. Showing the patient a photo of iron staining can also help them to understand the risk.

Looking for more info?

MDA National provides a variety of resources to support you in areas such as consent, medical documentation and complaints. Explore the links below for direct access.

Case Studies & Articles

- Introducing... the MDA National Medicare Committee
- Take Care with Medicare
- Consent for treatment
- Iron Infusion and Skin Staining
- Iron staining tips to avoid a claim
- Don't let a black mark stain your reputation
- More is Missed by Not Looking

Learning Activities

- An Introduction to Open Disclosure
- Informed consent challenges
- Using AI tools for record management in doctor consultations
- Practicalities of medicare
- Protecting Your Provider Number: When Medicare Comes Knocking
- Noteworthy: The how what where and why of medical documentation

It is essential that MDA National is notified of any potential incidents or claims. Early notification ensures that tailored advice and support are available when needed and helps us prepare effectively should the matter progress.

Please contact advice@mdanational.com.au or call us on 1800 011 255 for more information. Members can access our Member Online Services, Support in Practice or our LMS for information and education content.

Want more tailored information?
Scan QR code or visit mdanational.com.au/specialist/general-practitioners

*The case study is based on actual medical negligence claim or medico-legal referral; however certain facts have been omitted or changed by the author to ensure the anonymity of the parties involved. This report contains general information only. We recommend you contact your medical defence organisation or insurer when you require specific advice in relation to medico-legal matters. The MDA National Group is made up of MDA National Limited ABN 67 055 801 771 and MDA National Insurance Pty Ltd ABN 56 058 271 417 AFS Licence No. 238073. 8553.1