

# Paediatricians in Focus

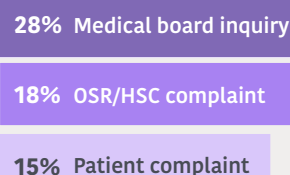
Incidents & Claims Insights | 1 Jan 2023 - 31 Dec 2024



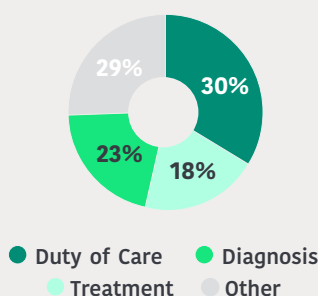
## 1 in 47

Paediatrician Members notified MDA National of a medico-legal case in 2024, down from 1 in 27 in 2023.

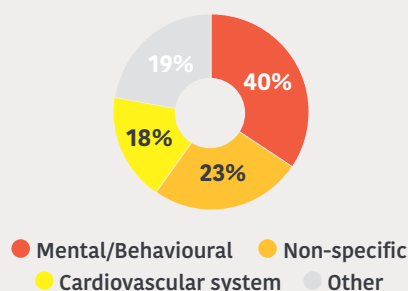
### Top 3 Claim Types



### Top 3 Incident Areas



### Top 3 Injury Types



## Key Themes from MDA National Case Data



### Managing expectations

Managing expectations of parents around the care of their child is critical. Complaints were received from parents alleging delays in diagnosis, treatment, or management, leading to patient dissatisfaction.

Key components that help manage expectations during the medical process include:

- Developing trust/rapport with the parent and child
- Identifying key issues for the parent to help prioritise these in consultations
- Asking the parent what their expectations are to assist you in assessing potential challenges
- Arranging appropriate follow-up to ensure matters are resolved.

It's important to maintain clear records, as documented interactions and decisions can be helpful if a complaint arises.



### Communication

Complaints received often centre around communication issues. These include:

- Unclear communication of the management or treatment process
- Billing matters
- Allegations of criticisms or verbal abuse of a parent
- Lack of access to the doctor
- Minimal or no communication overall



### Diagnosis

Around 30% of cases involved carers making complaints about diagnosis, treatment delays, or management of a patient. 60% of these cases involved patients with ADHD. Matters around diagnosis related to complaints about the speed of the diagnosis (too slow or too fast) and potential errors in diagnosis.

## Case Scenario\*

Dr X allows several 15-minute breaks during the day to catch up on his notes and call patients, but this time is often lost due to appointments going over. Dr X has received several messages requesting that he call Ms Y, but has found it difficult to find the time. Dr X saw Ms Y and her son, last week for ADHD management. The session went well with Dr X requesting further information from Ms Y to assist in her son's management, which he is yet to receive. When he calls Ms Y, she states she is not happy with his service and if she had known that it would take so long to get a hold of him or to get some medication she would've gone somewhere else. She states she is going to make a formal complaint about his service.

On review of the case, it was determined that the Member's assessment and request for gathering information was appropriate, with records showing no gap in regular medication prescriptions. In this situation, the doctor chose to terminate the doctor/patient relationship but ensured that the patient had an adequate supply of medication at the time to facilitate continuity of care.

To help manage Ms Y's expectations, Dr X could ensure that timeframes and care pathways are clearly communicated during conversations. Seeking clarification on Ms Y's priorities and expectations may also be helpful. In this case, maintaining clear records contributed to the case being dismissed.

## 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

- [Consent for treatment](#)
- [Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing – Ethical & Medico-legal Issues](#)
- [Consent to Medical Treatment for the Mature Minor](#)
- [Managing patient complaints](#)
- [Is it time for a second opinion](#)
- [Physical examinations how to avoid misunderstandings](#)
- [Shared decision-making and five-question model](#)
- [Your guide to navigating family disputes](#)
- [The angry patient](#)
- [Can I end the doctor-patient relationship?](#)
- [Ahpra complaints checklist](#)
- [Understanding Patient Expectations of Health Care: A Qualitative Study](#)

### Learning Activities

- [Introduction to Open Disclosure](#)
- [Informed consent challenges](#)
- [Noteworthy: The how what where and why of medical documentation](#)
- [The challenging emotions of difficult news](#)
- Check [MDA National LMS catalogue](#) for online and face to face workshops on 'Noteworthy - medical documentation' and 'Patient boundaries'

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.

For more information, please contact [advice@mdanational.com.au](mailto:advice@mdanational.com.au) or call us on **1800 011 255**. Members can access our **Member Online Services, Support in Practice** or our **LMS** for information and education content.

Members have access to individualised advice and support and Member benefits. Non-members have limited access to our library of resources and education content.

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