



Crown Point jury awards Gary woman \$400,000

Malpractice suit involved routine surgery that resulted in internal bleeding

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CROWN POINT -- A Lake Circuit Court jury has awarded \$400,000 to a Gary woman over a malpractice case involving routine surgery that nearly cost the woman her life.

Merrillville lawyer John M. Kopack said jurors returned a verdict Friday in favor of Elma Shaw and against San Tsai, a Merrillville obstetrician and gynecologist who performed a cesarean section child birth and a sterilization process called tubal ligation.

Kopack said, "Within 36 hours after Dr. Tsai performed the cesarean, Shaw underwent two emergency surgeries to stop internal bleeding, received 39 units of blood and came very close to death.

"The average female has about six liters of blood in her system. Shaw received about 19.5 liters in blood transfusions. As fast as those nurses worked to push blood into Shaw and keep her alive, the blood was hemorrhaging into her abdomen through blood vessels that remained open after Dr. Tsai's surgeries," Kopack said.

Kopack said Dr. Tsai performed a second surgery to close the hemorrhaging blood vessels, but Shaw continued to lose blood and her vital signs remained critical until a third surgery was performed by Dr. Kumpol Dennison of Merrillville who found damaged blood vessels.

Kopack blamed the damage on Dr. Tsai. Merrillville lawyer Kathleen Maicher argued the bleeding was an unfortunate complication that also is a risk of surgery and not Dr. Tsai's fault. The jury heard four days of testimony and argument about Shaw's ordeal, which resulted in \$35,000 in medical bills. Maicher couldn't be reached Monday for comment.

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