

# The Difference Between Complications And Negligence

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A patient who was minutes away from his colonoscopy, asked me how many colonoscopies I had performed. Before I could answer, he quickly followed-up asking if any of my patients developed perforation of the colon after the procedure.

I satisfied his initial inquiry when I informed him that I have intruded into at least 20,000 colons in the past 2 decades. With regard to his second and more 'penetrating' question, I told him, yes, there have been a few perforations. I continued the dialogue in order to place the issue in context for him and his wife so he wouldn't be spooked before his procedure. We didn't want a panicked patient leaping off the gurney and high-tailing through our waiting room in a flapping opened-back gown to the parking lot. Fortunately, our discussion accomplished its purpose and his procedure proceeded calmly and uneventfully.

Sure, complications matter, but numbers can deceive.

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