Source: Surgical Error May Be To Blame For Murtha’s Death

A Pennsylvania congressman and longtime friend of the late Rep. John Murtha says the congressman's large intestine was damaged during gallbladder surgery and an infection developed.

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The sudden death Monday of Rep. John Murtha could be attributed to a surgical error, according to a source close to a congressman.

Murtha, a Democratic Congressman for Pennsylvania who was a longtime fixture on the House subcommittee that oversees Pentagon spending, died after complications from gallbladder surgery, according to his office.

According to Rep. Bob Brady, a Pennsylvania congressman and longtime friend of Murtha, the congressman's large intestine was damaged during gallbladder surgery and the complications led him to be hospitalized, the Associated Press reports.

The gallbladder surgery was performed days earlier at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

Murtha died Monday at Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington, VA, where he was admitted on Jan. 31. He was 77.

Rep. Brady says an infection developed following the procedure, and that Murtha had a fever when he was admitted to the Virginia hospital.

According to CNN, the Democratic congressman had undergone scheduled laparoscopic surgery to remove his gallbladder. The procedure was "routine minimally invasive surgery," but doctors "hit his intestines," a source close to the late congressman told CNN.

"This should have been a really simple surgery. Laparoscopic gallbladder surgery usually is no big deal," reported CNN's senior medical correspondent Elizabeth Cohen. "Many times people don't even get admitted to the hospital."

However, a source told CNN that the congressman may have died after his intestines were nicked during the procedure.

Murtha was initially hospitalized in December and had to postpone a hearing with Defense Secretary Robert Gates on the administration's strategy in Afghanistan. The congressman returned to work after a few days in the hospital and helped

oversee final passage of the 2010 defense appropriations bill.

According to Raw Story, it's not unusual for complications to arise during routine surgery. In a recent survey at the Mayo Clinic, 9 percent of doctors admitted making a major error during the last 3 months. Seventy percent of those doctors say that they were at fault for the error.

Sources: The Associated Press, CNN, www.rawstory.com [1]

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