

Professional liability in Dermatology in Catalonia (Spain) from 1986 to 2023

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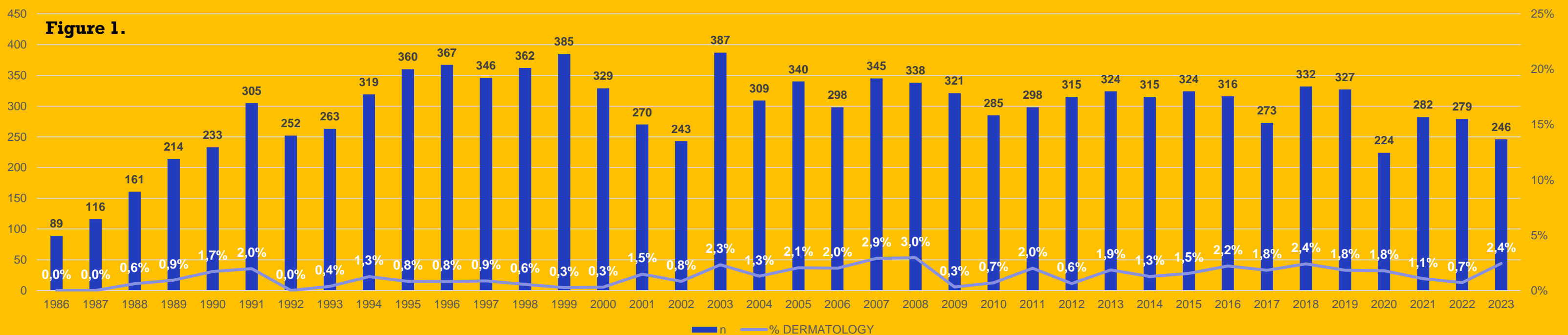
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Introduction. Knowledge of the data on complaints in the specialty of Dermatology and its diffusion among specialists to improve the quality of patient care and reduce the rate of adverse events and the number of complaints for professional liability has been exposed as a necessity in our context and at the international level.

Methods. The Professional Liability Service of the Council of Medical Associations of Catalonia (CCMC) manages the majority of professional liability policies in Catalonia (more than 26,500 doctors) and has been recording all claims against insured professionals since 1986.

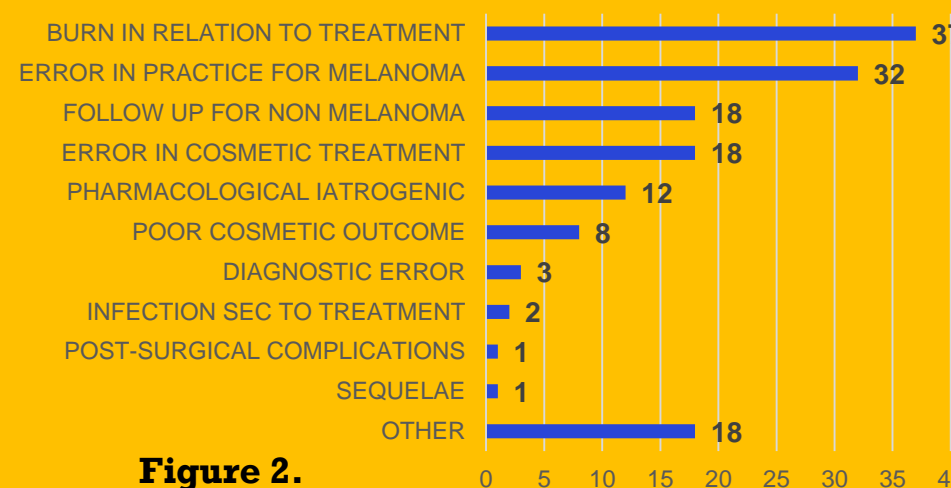
Results. Between 1986 and 2023 11,092 claims were identified, of which 150 (1.4%) related to the specialty of Dermatology, which showed that this specialty has a relatively low risk of claims. Furthermore, analyses of the annual number of cases during this period showed a stable trend (Figure 1).



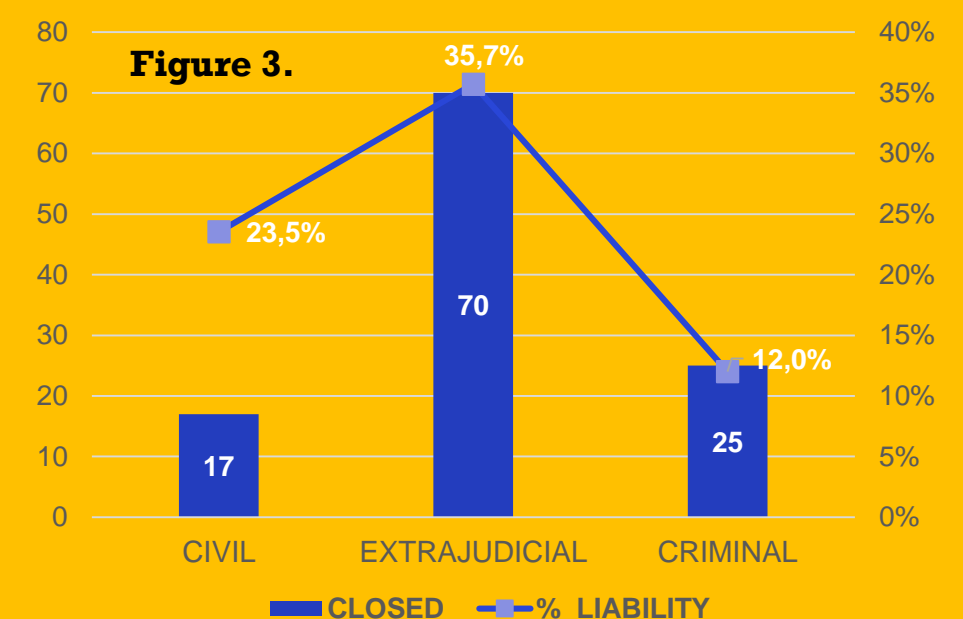
In terms of procedures, 62% of complaints were out-of-court, 15% were civil and 23% were criminal. The main reason for complaint was burn in relation to treatment (24.6%), followed by an error in practice for melanoma (21.3%), follow-up for carcinoma other than melanoma (12%) and an error in cosmetic treatment (12%) (Figure 2). In 46% of cases, the complaint was not about surgery, in 42% it was about surgery and in 12%, it was about diagnostic or therapeutic procedures.

Regarding the existence of professional liability in the cases registered, either by sentence or out-of-court settlement, of the 112 cases closed (74.66%) in the period 1986-2023, professional liability was assumed in 28.6% of the cases (n=32), with an uneven distribution according to the procedure: 12% in criminal proceedings, 23.5% in civil proceedings and 35.7% in out-of-court proceedings (Figure 3).

The average amount in the 32 compensated cases was 33,040.09 euros, with an unequal distribution according to the type of litigation: 61,315.94 euros in the civil procedure, 33,164.27 euros in the criminal procedure and 28,501.05 euros in the extrajudicial procedure.



Conclusion. The stability of the claim rate in dermatology over the period studied by the CCMC, the high rate of out-of-court claims and the low rate of compensation and its amounts show that Dermatology is a specialty with a low risk of professional liability in our scenario.



References. Arimany-Manso J, Martin-Fumadó C, Mascaró-Ballester JM. Medical malpractice issues in Dermatology: clinical safety and the dermatologist. Actas Dermosifiliogr (Engl Ed). 2019;110(1):20-27. doi: 10.1016/j.ad.2018.06.011.



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