

# Collaboration in Health Care and Medical Malpractice Liability: An Experimental Investigation

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## Abstract

The treatment of a patient often implies consultations with different health care professionals. This complex health care pathway raises the issue of the regulation of health care quality. In this study, we explore how collaboration between health care professionals affects the precaution behavior of each one according to the liability regime. To this end, we develop a theoretical model that is tested in a controlled laboratory experiment. Each health care professional chooses the precaution level invested to treat the patient. His decisions have real consequences outside the lab for charities dealing with real patients. Experimental conditions vary the number of involved health care professionals and the liability regime. Contrary to theory, we show that the negligence rule and strict liability do not provide optimal incentives to take care. The negligence rule is more efficient than strict liability to reduce the absolute deviations from optimal precaution level. Moreover, under both liability rules, collaboration decreases the precaution level of health care professionals.

**Keywords:** Laboratory experiment, Liability, Medical malpractice, Multiple injurers, Team work

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