

SUMMARY

DR. SANJEEV SHARMA (CPSO# 88277)

1. Disposition

On August 17, 2018, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (the Committee) required Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Sharma to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to his management of post-operative complications, including bleeding and post-operative patellar instability, and his medical record keeping; and to review literature related to these issues and submit a written summary of what he has learned.

2. Introduction

A family member of the patient complained to the College that Dr. Sharma nicked the patient's genicular artery during a revision of the patient's total knee replacement, failed to identify a bleeding vessel despite operations to remove multiple and recurring hematomas, failed to order an x-ray following the patient's post-operative fall and despite a change in the patient's condition, failed to acknowledge and correct the patient's dislocated patella in a timely manner, and showed no concern that the patient was ambulating with a dislocated patella.

Dr. Sharma responded that genicular artery injury is a known risk of total knee replacement surgery, but that he did not think he had caused such an injury based on the presentation of the knee post-surgery. He stated that he was never made aware of the patient's fall, and that the patient had not experienced a change in symptoms or an inability to weight bear. He indicated that he never reviewed the x-ray and was never made aware of the findings until May 7, 2015, but if he had, he would have immediately acted on the information, as he did on May 7, when he referred the patient for urgent surgery.

3. Committee Process

A Surgical Panel of the Committee, consisting of public and physician members, met to review the relevant records and documents related to the complaint. The Committee applies legislation and regulations, and refers to policies that the College has developed, which reflect the College's professional expectations for physicians practising in Ontario. College policies may be accessed on the College's website at www.cpso.on.ca, under the heading "Policies & Publications." The Committee will provide a copy of any policy it refers to in this decision.

4. Committee's Analysis

Although the Committee could not determine if Dr. Sharma nicked the genicular artery, they noted that nicking the genicular artery is a known complication of total knee replacement surgery, and therefore did not have concerns about that aspect of Dr. Sharma's care. However, the Committee determined that Dr. Sharma did not appropriately manage the patient's post-operative bleeding, in that he should have intervened definitively and considered interventional radiology and embolization. Further, the Committee was puzzled by Dr. Sharma's unwillingness to consider the possibility that he did nick the genicular artery, as the number of hematomas and amount of bleeding indicated a possible arterial injury.

The Committee also determined that Dr. Sharma should have ordered an x-ray, as this is the appropriate action after a post-surgical fall, and that Dr. Sharma made the patellar dislocation diagnosis unacceptably late. While Dr. Sharma stated that he was not made aware of the patient's fall, he was the most responsible physician. Therefore, he should have followed up with the patient and maintained communication with other members of the patient's care team, reviewed the patient's x-ray, and made a timely diagnosis.

While the Committee noted that Dr. Sharma acted quickly in arranging corrective urgent surgery once he identified the patellar dislocation, the Committee was concerned that the patient had ultimately been discharged from hospital with a patellar dislocation.