

Injured penis worth \$1.5 million to jury

A Miami-Dade jury awarded \$1.5 million to former South Beach bartender Patrick Timothy O'Neill, who said two urologists injured his penis while treating him for warts.

O'Neill, 43, filed suit in '98 against Drs. Bernardo Lederman and Jacob Cohen, along with South Beach Urological Associates.

Lederman "surgically removed" three papilloma on April 18, 1996. Afterward, O'Neill says, he developed an infection and received treatment through the following month. "On each and every visit, the defendants assured [O'Neill] that there was nothing wrong with his penis and that he was 'obsessing over nothing,'" says the complaint, filed by attorney David H. Gold.

O'Neill ended up with a "disabling case of Peyronie's Disease, among other things," the suit says. Peyronie's Disease "begins as a localized inflammation and can develop into a hardened scar," according to a website co-sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. "In severe cases, the hardened plaque reduces flexibility, causing pain and forcing the penis to bend or arc during erection."

Gold says O'Neill suffered constant penile pain, plus curvature and an atrophic-like condition that caused a decrease in size. O'Neill has undergone treatments for the past 10 years, including anesthesia injections into the penis and spinal epidural space.

He alleged negligent care. "He has to use Lidocaine every day on his penis," Gold says. He must also take the painkiller Percocet before and after sex.

Miami-Dade Circuit Judge

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Gerald Hubbard presided over the five-day trial. The six jurors — four men, two women — deliberated for more than an hour Monday. They awarded O'Neill \$1 million for past pain and suffering, \$490,000 for future pain and suffering, and \$10,000 for past medical expenses. They found Lederman 90 percent at fault. Cohen got hit for 10 percent.

"The jury said by their verdict that they believed him, they believed his injury, they recognized and understood what he's been going through for 10½ years," Gold says.

Attorneys William Fink and Constantine "Dean" Nickas represent the docs. "We do not believe that the plaintiff's alleged injuries are related to the care rendered by our clients," Nickas says. "We are evaluating the events that took place during the trial and considering our appellate options."

O'Neill, an aspiring screenwriter, now lives in Los Angeles.