

Claims and complaints insights

Dermatologists



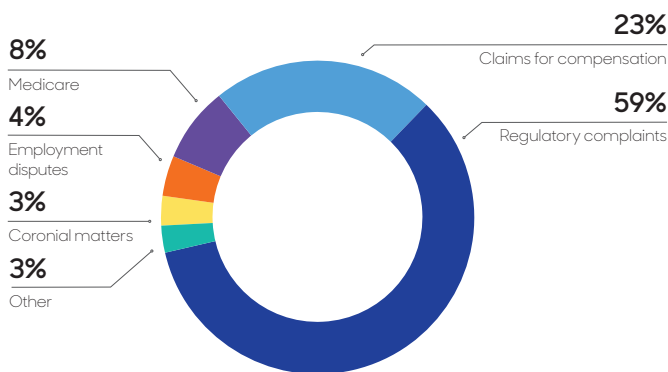
1 in 8

Avant dermatologist members had a matter raised about the provision of their care in FY2021.

Data source: matters indemnified FY2021

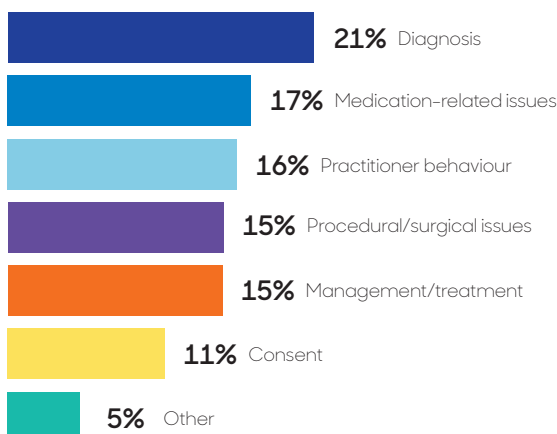
Our data analysis

The types of matters Avant assisted dermatologists with included:



Data source: matters indemnified FY2017-FY2021

Regulatory complaints and claims for compensation related to:



Diagnosis-related issues

53% of diagnosis-related allegations involved neoplasms e.g.

- Malignant melanoma of the skin
- Other malignant neoplasms of the skin

These cases related to either a missed/delayed diagnosis or a misdiagnosis.

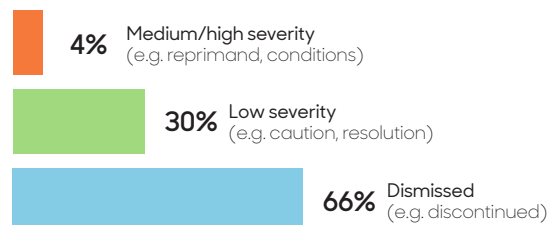
Medication-related issues

42% of medication-related issues were medications for acne e.g. Isotretinoin

Practitioner behaviour issues

45% of practitioner behaviour issues were related to communication e.g. allegations of failing to communicate results and information appropriately to patients, colleagues or other providers

Complaints: Outcomes for dermatologists



Note: Cases often incur significant legal costs and can take years to resolve. This includes cases that have been dismissed.

Key points

- Dermatologists are more likely to be subject to a regulatory complaint than to be sued for compensation.
- The most common allegations were diagnosis-related (missed/delayed diagnoses and misdiagnoses), followed by medication-related issues and practitioner behaviour.
- Over half of diagnosis-related allegations involved neoplasms.
- 2 in 3 complaints against dermatologists were dismissed with no further action.

Notes on the outcomes analysis

The outcomes analysis was conducted on regulatory complaints filed against dermatologists who are Avant members over the five-year period from July 2016 to June 2021 (FY2017-FY2021). Only complaints with a known outcome were included.

The outcomes were classified based on the degree of severity for members. Shown below are some of the types of outcomes in each category:

- **Dismissed** – e.g. discontinued, no further action
- **Low severity** – e.g. counselled, caution, conciliation, resolution, fine
- **Medium and high severity** – e.g. reprimand, conditions, registration changes, suspension, cancellation

Glossary

- **Claims** refers to claims for money, compensation and civil claims.
- **Complaints/regulatory complaints** relate to formal complaints to regulators e.g. Ahpra.
- **Medicare matters** include Medicare investigations and audits.
- **Employment disputes** are matters where Avant defends members against complaints or supports members to resolve employment issues.
- **Matters** include claims, complaints, coronial cases and other matters such as employment disputes and Medicare.

Resources

If you receive a claim or complaint, contact us (avant.org.au/MLAS) on 1800 128 268 for expert medico-legal advice on how to respond – available 24/7 in emergencies.

For any queries on this analysis, please contact us at research@avant.org.au



For more information on communicating with patients, including advice about obtaining consent and a wide range of other topics, visit the Avant Learning Centre, avant.org.au/avant-learning-centre, where you will find articles, case studies, podcasts, webinars, videos, factsheets and many other resources.

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IMPORTANT: Avant routinely codes information collected in the course of assisting member doctors in medico-legal matters into a standardised, deidentified dataset. This retrospective analysis was conducted using this dataset. The findings represent the experience of these doctors in the period of time specified, which may not reflect the experience of all doctors in Australia. This publication is not comprehensive and does not constitute legal or medical advice. You should seek legal or other professional advice before relying on any content, and practise proper clinical decision-making with regard to the individual circumstances. Persons implementing any recommendations contained in this publication must exercise their own independent skill or judgement or seek appropriate professional advice relevant to their own particular practice. Compliance with any recommendations will not in any way guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients and others coming into contact with the health professional or practice. Avant is not responsible to you or anyone else for any loss suffered in connection with the use of this information. Information is only current at the date initially published [June 2022]. © Avant Mutual Group Limited 2022. MJN-948 06/22 (DT-2517)