

Stryker faces mounting lawsuits over recalled hip implants

Patients in the US who were implanted with Stryker's Rejuvenate and ABG II hip systems and have had to undergo revision surgeries are now suing the Kalamazoo, Michigan firm for selling defective devices.

The hip implants were subjects of a US recall by Stryker in July, after it emerged that there was a risk of fretting and corrosion with the devices. These issues in turn can cause adverse local tissue reactions, resulting in pain and/or inflammation at the local joint site (www.clinica.co.uk, 11 July 2012). The company stopped global distribution of the devices as part of the recall.

South Florida legal firm Searcy Denney Scarola Barnhart & Shipley is now representing eight patients who received these implants between June 2009 and September 2011 and then underwent revision surgery "in as little as eight months." The firm had filed one complaint first in August, but have just filed a further seven lawsuits against Stryker Orthopaedics; all the

suits were filed in a Bergen County Superior Court in New Jersey.

"Stryker marketed its devices as an improvement over and alternative to other metal-on-metal hip implants when in fact these systems have caused significantly more severe injuries than comparable systems on the market," lawyers say

According to the complaint, the revision surgery revealed in each instance heavy metal toxicity, including "the presence of milky, turbid fluid; large pseudotumor formation; soft tissue necrosis; and muscle loss and/or bony necrosis at the proximal femur".

Problems with metal-on-metal

(MoM) hip implants have been under the spotlight for some time, particularly the issue of the debris from metal components wearing down and circulating in the blood stream. At the time of its recall in July, Stryker had insisted that the issues with Rejuvenate and ABG II were not the same as those seen with MoM hips. "This issue is related to fretting and/or corrosion at or about the modular neck junction, not metal wear associated with articulating surfaces," the Stryker spokesperson had told *Clinica*.

However, lawyers at Searcy Denney claim in their press release that "Stryker marketed its devices as an improvement over and alternative to other metal-on-metal hip implants when in fact these systems have caused significantly more severe injuries than comparable systems on the market".

The plaintiffs are seeking compensatory, consortium, actual and punitive damages.

Stryker has declined to comment.