



Lasik Surgery Patient Wins \$1.6M for Distorted Vision Due to Cornea Damage



MISSTEPS ALLEGED: Adam Slater claims that the doctor should have screened out his client as a poor surgical candidate and failed to obtain informed consent.

A patient who suffered cornea damage from Lasik surgery, allegedly due to the ophthalmologist's negligence, accepted \$1.6 million on Sept. 26 to settle his suit, *Mariano v. Wong*.

Nicholas Mariano, a Somerset lawyer, went to Dr. Michael Wong in Princeton on Sept. 21, 2007, hoping to fix his nearsightedness so he would no longer have to wear corrective lenses, says his lawyer, Adam Slater of Mazie Slater & Freeman in Roseland.

Instead the surgery left him with a thinned and bulging cornea, known as corneal ectasia, and worse vision, Slater says.

The suit alleged Wong was negligent for not screening Mariano out as a bad candidate for the surgery due to his irregular corneas and

failed to obtain informed consent because he did not warn of the heightened risk of a bad outcome.

Mariano took part twice in a clinical trial for an experimental treatment meant to strengthen the corneas by placing drops of riboflavin on them and exposing them to ultraviolet light, but it did not work, Slater says.

Mariano's vision is now correctable only by wearing rigid gas-permeable contact lenses that can be tolerated for only a few hours due to discomfort and are subject to glare. The problems have impacted his ability to drive, especially at night, and he had to stop practicing law, Slater says.

Mariano sued Wong and his Princeton Eye Group in Middlesex County Superior Court.

Defense lawyer R. Scott Eichhorn, of Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin in Roseland, confirms the settlement.

— By Mary Pat Gallagher