



**BUSINESS**

# Doctor Alleges Discrimination By Asian Managers Who Found Him Insensitive

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by **Contributing Editor**

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A doctor of Iraqi descent is suing Beverly Hospital, alleging management at his longtime Montebello workplace discriminated and retaliated against him for backing a Nigerian-American physician's claim that she was subjected to disparate treatment by Asian-American colleagues.

Dr. Ihsan Shamaan's Los Angeles Superior Court lawsuit alleges retaliation, intentional interference with prospective economic relations, failure to prevent harassment, discrimination or retaliation and a violation of the state Health and Safety Code.

Shamaan seeks unspecified compensatory and punitive damages in the suit filed Thursday. A hospital representative could not be immediately reached.

Shamaan has been a doctor and surgeon for more than 50 years and has had privileges at Beverly hospital since 1992, the suit states. In June 2016, he signed a written declaration in support of the plaintiff in a lawsuit brought by an anesthesiologist from Nigeria who alleged that she was discriminated and subjected to retaliation by a group of Asian-American anesthesiologists as well as Asian-American managers at the hospital, including hospital administrator Alice Cheng, according to the suit.

"I believe that Beverly Hospital stopped scheduling (the plaintiff) for surgical cases at Beverly Hospital due to her race," Shamaan wrote on behalf of the Nigerian doctor.

Hospital management decreased the number of surgeries Shamaan could perform in retaliation for his declaration, the suit alleges.

Shamaan was conducting a hernia surgery last November and was assisted by a circulating nurse, a scrub technician and an anesthesiologist, all of whom were of Asian descent, the suit states. He asked that the appropriate surgical supplies be brought to him by the circulating nurse, something that was always done routinely in the past, the suit states.

However, Shamaan saw after the surgery started that not all the surgical items were in place, so he told the circulating nurse to obtain them, the suit states. The nurse had trouble speaking and understanding English and she began talking with the scrub technician in a Chinese dialect, according to the suit.

The nurse found three of the four items after 10 to 15 minutes, but not the mesh the doctor requested, according to the suit. He told her to immediately get the mesh, but she could not understand him and she continued to speak in her language with the scrub technician while the patient remained anesthetized, according to the suit.

The nurse left and returned about a half hour later with some mesh. but not the type Shamaan wanted, so he had to improvise with what he was provided, the suit states.

The nurse and scrub technician continued to speak in their language, disrupting Shamaan's concentration and interfering with the surgery, according to the suit.

"Unnecessary dialogue in the surgical room in a foreign language, a language that Dr. Shamaan does not know or understand, is distracting to the surgeon and interferes with (his) concentration," the suit states.

Distractions in the operating room risk the patient's safety, the suit states, so he asked the nurse and scrub technician to speak English.

A surgery that should have taken approximately 45 minutes lasted about two hours, the suit states. The supervising nurse later told the doctor that he should not speak to Chinese-American employees the way he did and added, "You are a racist," the suit states.

.During a subsequent hospital staff meeting dealing with Shamaan's comments to the nurse and scrub technician, Shamaan defended his remarks, saying their dialogue interfered with his

concentration during surgery and that he was against racial discrimination, the suit states.

In January, Shamaan received a letter from hospital management directing him to attend a three-day sensitivity training program, an order that has harmed his “good name and reputation as he did not unlawfully discriminate against anyone,” the suit states.

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