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# Discounting a surgical risk: data, understanding, and gist

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**Abstract:**

Excerpt: A few days after the surgery, Ms. Reid came in for an emergency appointment with Dr. Feng. It was obvious that she was irate, but her voice could barely be heard above the noise of the clinic. "I thought you said this was rare," she said, shaking a printout of a journal article on the subject. My recurrent laryngeal nerve was injured. I'm a teacher, and I have children! I need my voice. I would have never done the surgery if I knew there was a 4 percent risk that I would lose my voice!" Was Dr. Feng negligent in explaining the risks of surgery to Ms. Reid? Was she required to use precise percentages of risk?

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