

# Concurrent Surgery The MGH Experience with the Boston Globe Spotlight Team

Society of Surgical Chairs  
Public Trust, Transparency and the Media

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# Concurrent Surgery

## The Perfect Storm

- A borderline acceptable practice
- Disgruntled faculty members
- A hungry investigative reporting team
- A less than desirable baseline relationship between the health system and the city's leading newspaper



# Concurrent Surgery

## MGH Timeline - #1

- Pre-2011 - Followed CMS billing guidelines
- 2011-2013 - Concern raised; External review; New policy/education; ACS review
- 2013-2014 - Reported to State Board of Registration, Department of Public Health, JCAHO with no negative findings or actions

# Concurrent Surgery

## MGH Timeline - #2

- 2014-2015 - Spotlight Team investigation begins
- 2015 - MGH Response: Education, Consultants, Outcome Analysis, “Self Defense”
- October 25, 2015 - Story Published

# Boston Sunday Globe

OCTOBER 25, 20

1005504  
LLENMOE KEITH  
4 BATTERY WHARF

8090

4504



## Clash in the name of care

It was a battle pitting a star surgeon against a great hospital,



*This story was reported and written by Globe Spotlight team reporters Jenn Abelson, Liz Kowalczyk, Jonathan Saltzman, and editor Scott Allen.*

Dr. Kirkham Wood arrived in the operating room at Massachusetts General Hospital before 7 a



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November 2015-present: Follow up stories, editorials

JOAN VENNOCHI

# With double-booked surgeries, the patient has a right to know



By Joan Vennoch | GLOBE COLUMNIST OCTOBER 26, 2015

SOME PEOPLE can't walk and chew gum at the same time.

Then, there are highly skilled surgeons who can perform complex and risky procedures on two patients, in two separate operating rooms, over the same scheduled time period.

It's called concurrent surgery, and how it plays out at Massachusetts General Hospital was detailed in an extensive [Globe Spotlight Team report](#). The Globe investigation, which focused on specific malpractice litigation, revealed that double-booked surgery is accepted practice at MGH. Surprisingly, there's no obligation to tell the patient that it will be happening — even though some top medical professionals question the ethics of it all.



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EDITORIAL

# Patients owed full disclosure on concurrent surgeries



By The Editorial Board | OCTOBER 28, 2015



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# MGH records sought in double-booking review

10 years of documents concerning practice of double-booking cases



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/PAT GREENHOUSE

Massachusetts General Hospital.



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NOVEMBER 15, 2015

☐ SPOTLIGHT UPDATE

## MGH files sought in federal inquiry

10 years of documents  
concern practice of  
double-booking cases

By Jonathan Saltzman,  
Jenn Abelson, and Liz Kowalczyk

Federal prosecutors have subpoenaed 10 years of internal records from Massachusetts General Hospital and have interviewed several physicians as part of an investigation into surgeons running two operating rooms at the same time, according to individuals with direct knowledge of the probe.

Some MGH staff members have raised concerns for years about double-booked operations in the renowned hospital's orthopedics department, a dispute little known to the public until a Globe Spotlight investigation last month. Hospital of

# In the aftermath of horror, resolve



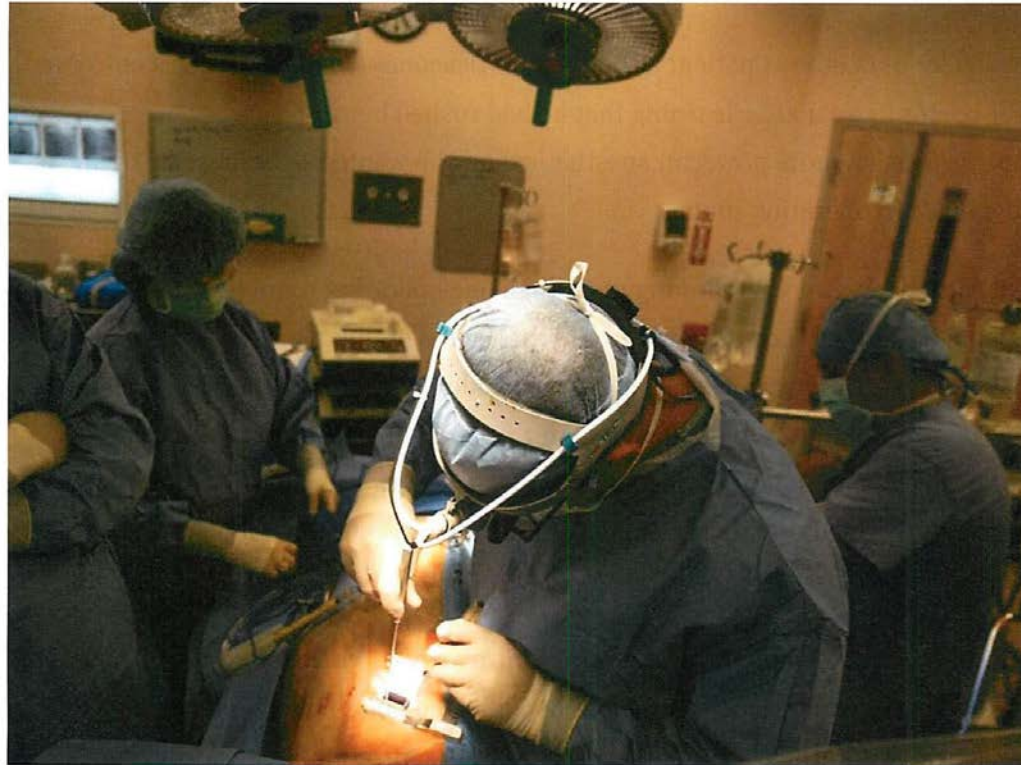
People reacted on Saturday morning, near the scene of one of Friday's terrorist shootings in Paris.



Members of the French military patrolled near the Eiffel Tower, one of several popular tourist sites closed Saturday.



# Concurrent surgeries come under new scrutiny



JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center has told surgeons that “plans for overlapping surgery should be disclosed to the patient prior to the surgery.”

By Jenn Abelson, Jonathan Saltzman and Liz Kowalczyk | GLOBE STAFF

DECEMBER 20, 2015

# State acts on simultaneous surgeries



DINA RUDICK/GLOBE STAFF

The Lunder Building at Massachusetts General Hospital, which opened in 2011, is where orthopedic surgeons operate.

By Jonathan Saltzman and Jenn Abelson | GLOBE STAFF JANUARY 07, 2016



PETER L. SLAVIN AND THOMAS J. LYNCH

# Our view of overlapping surgery



PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

The main facade of Massachusetts General Hospital.

By Peter L. Slavin and Thomas J. Lynch | JANUARY 10, 2016



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## Follow-up #1

- ACS Committee/Policy Statement
- Department of Justice Investigation
- US Senate Investigation
- New MGH Policy with increased Transparency and Documentation

# Concurrent Surgery

## Follow-up #2

- Total cost to MGH: Millions of dollars.....and potentially much more to come
- No obvious effect on institutional or clinical volume, ? reputation



# Concurrent Surgery

Satisfaction



2016 – Pulitzer Prize  
For Investigative Reporting:  
Tampa Bay Times  
and  
Sarasota Herald Tribune