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Abortion clinic owner no stranger to lawsuits

PHOENIX (AP) - A New York physician under investigation in the death of a patient at his Phoenix abortion clinic is no stranger to malpractice lawsuits.

Dr. Moshe Hachamovitch, owner of the now-closed A-Z Women's Center and other troubled abortion clinics in New York and Texas, has been named in at least 28 lawsuits claiming negligence and other problems, The Arizona Republic reported in a copyright story in Sunday's editions.

Hachamovitch, 62, is being investigated by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office.

He also faces a state medical board probe and a lawsuit by the family of Lou Anne Herron, the woman who died in April 1998 at his Phoenix clinic.

Dr. John Biskind and his clinical administrator, Carol Stuart, both were indicted on manslaughter charges in Ms. Herron's death and could face up to 121/2 years in prison if convicted.

An autopsy found that Herron, 33, suffered a ruptured uterus during the late-term abortion.

Police say paramedics found her lying on blood-drenched sheets - apparently dead for some time.

The Republic said six patients nationwide have died. Two were Hachamovitch's own patients; four others died after abortions by doctors who worked for the chain.

One patient, a 15-year-old, died after an abortion performed by a doctor so ill that he himself died the day of her funeral.

The newspaper also cited, for example, problems at one of Hachamovitch's New York City clinics.

In 1986, Luz Maria Rodriguez, who was eight to 10 weeks pregnant, died from complications at his Bronx clinic. Right before she was to be discharged, Rodriguez, 40, started turning blue from lack of oxygen.

CPR was performed and paramedics were called. Rodriguez was taken by ambulance to a hospital, where she remained in a coma for four days until her death.



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A medical malpractice review found that the doctor had not removed all the contents of Ms. Rodriguez's womb, which led to hemorrhaging. As the clinic owner, Hachamovitch was found guilty of malpractice and paid part of a \$1.5 million settlement to the woman's daughter, the newspaper said.

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While Hachamovitch was fighting to protect his license in New York, he was spending years cleaning up legal messes in his now-defunct clinics in Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. Hachamovitch let his Texas license expire in 1997.

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Hachamovitch, who still operates clinics in the Bronx and Long Island, refused to comment. His attorneys in New York and Arizona refused as well to talk to The Republic.

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