

Jackie Lacey

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NEWS RELEASE

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Doctor Convicted of Three Murders in Prescription Drug Overdose Case

A Rowland Heights doctor was convicted today of three counts of second-degree murder for prescribing massive quantities of addictive and dangerous drugs to patients with no legitimate need, three of whom died of overdoses, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

A jury of 10 women and two men found Hsiu Ying "Lisa" Tseng, 45, guilty of 23 counts, including 19 counts of unlawful controlled substance prescription and one count of obtaining a controlled substance by fraud in case BA394495.

The guilty verdict marks the first time in the United States where a doctor was convicted of murder for overprescribing drugs.

"This verdict sends a strong message to individuals in the medical community who put patients at risk for their own financial gain," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said. "In this case, the doctor stole the lives of three young people in her misguided effort to get rich quick."

"This is the most severe penalty we have ever gotten on a doctor who illegally overprescribed drugs to patients," District Attorney Lacey added.

Tseng was convicted of second-degree murder for the deaths of Vu Nguyen, 28, of Lake Forest; Steven Ogle, 24, of Palm Desert; and Joseph Rovero, 21, an Arizona State University student from San Ramon.

Nguyen died March 2, 2009. Ogle died a month later on April 9, 2009. Rovero died Dec. 18, 2009. All were patients of Tseng, who prescribed a myriad of drugs for the three young men.

Tseng, licensed to practice in 1997, opened a storefront medical office in Rowland Heights in 2005. During the timeframe when nine of her patients died in less than three years, Tseng took in \$5 million from her clinic and continued dispensing potent and addictive drugs unabated.

Deputy District Attorneys John Niedermann and Grace Rai of the Major Narcotics Division prosecuted the case.

In closing arguments, Niedermann told jurors that in dozens of instances, Tseng kept no medical records of visits or patient prescriptions. In many instances, she faked medical records when authorities began investigating, he said.

Tseng, who has remained in custody since March 2012, returns to court on Dec. 14 for sentencing before Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge George Lomeli. She faces up to life in state prison.

The Drug Enforcement Administration launched an investigation in 2008 after a pharmacy reported overlapping customers. The lead investigative agency was the California Medical Board.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.