Infant Burned: Nurse Heated Wet Washcloth In Microwave.

A four day-old infant sustained second degree burns on his leg and foot when a nurse in the family medicine clinic at a hospital put a heated wet washcloth on his heel to facilitate drawing blood.

According to the New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, there was no hot running water at the clinic, so the nurse wet the washcloth with cold water and put it in the microwave for one minute. Then she tested the temperature on her own arm, thought it was OK, put the washcloth inside a disposable diaper and wrapped it around the infant's foot.

The family's expert witness was an RN. Her affidavit stated it was a deviation from the standard of care for a nurse to heat a wet washcloth in a microwave for use on a pediatric patient.

The infant needed follow-up treatment for more than three months, the court said, including debridement of the burned skin. **Salter v. Deaconess Family Medical Center, 701 N.Y.S.2d 586 (N.Y. App., 1999).**

Developmentally Disabled Adult: Nurse Should Have Listened To Complaints, Court Says.

An opinion just published by the Court of Appeals of Ohio upheld the right of the deceased's probate administrator to sue a hospital and the nurse, medical assistant and receptionist working in the outpatient clinic for the death from a heart attack of a mildly retarded man who was only twenty-six years old.

He became ill riding to the store on the bus with his mother, so they got off the bus at the hospital to go to the clinic. He vomited between the bus stop and the clinic. He came in and started pounding on the front desk and demanded to see a doctor. Only pediatric patients were being seen that day, and only a pediatrician was on duty, so he was offered a taxi voucher to go to another hospital's emergency room. He and his mother left on foot, walked to the store and asked a store employee for a ride home. He died at home two hours later from a heart attack.

Skin Care: Court Faults Nurses For Patient's Death.

The patient already had skin breakdown when she entered the hospital. Due to what the New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, characterized as negligent nursing practices the patient developed numerous bedsores in the hospital and according to the court her bedsores caused her death.

The court ruled it was a departure from good and accepted nursing practices for the nurses to massage her skin and to use a sheepskin sheet rather than getting the right mattress to promote healing. The court did not specify what type of mattress would have been appropriate.

The judgment for the family against the hospital included $130,000 for otherwise unnecessary medical expenses and $1,000,000 for the patient's pain and suffering before she died. However, the court ruled the pain and suffering component was excessive and reduced it to $400,000. **Parson v. Interfaith Medical Center, 700 N.Y.S. 2d 224 (N.Y. App., 1999).**

Hepatitis B: Not Reported To County – Baby Placed At Risk.

The New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, faulted a hospital clinic for reporting a positive prenatal hepatitis B test only to the mother's doctor.

Because the doctor neglected to pass it along to the mother, at the time of delivery she did not tell anyone and nothing was done to keep the baby from contracting the disease. If the local health department had been properly notified, the court believed the process would have been set in motion to prevent the baby from being infected. **Doe v. Lai-Yet Lam, M.D., 701 N.Y.S.2d 347 (N.Y. App., 2000).**

If anyone comes in with chest pains a nurse should take vitals, notify any available physician and call 911 if the clinic cannot handle a cardiac emergency.

COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO, 1998.

The Court of Appeals ruled the lower court judge was wrong to dismiss the case, as a jury should have heard the mother's and the clinic's staff's stories. A jury should have been allowed to reach a verdict whether the man effectively communicated his condition and whether the nurse and the others listened to him. Apparently he did say his chest and arm hurt, which the court said should have got their attention. **Walker v. East End Community Health Center, Inc., 722 N.E. 2d 550 (Ohio App.,**

ICU: Patient's Arm Strapped To Bed Rail, Lawsuit For Ulnar Nerve Injury.

The Supreme Court of Tennessee accepted expert testimony that residual numbness in the patient's arm was caused by the arm being strapped to the bedrail in one position for an extended period of time in the ICU to prevent the patient from removing her IV while intubated and sedated suffering from viral pneumonia.

The court discounted the medical notes from the hospital that acknowledged there was an ulnar nerve injury but gave it an unknown etiology. **Seavers v. Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge, 9 S.W. 3d 86 (Tenn., 1999).**