

Post-Colonoscopy Care: Court Upholds Jury's Verdict Of No Nursing Negligence.

The patient was given Versed and Demerol for a twenty-five minute procedure involving both a colonoscopy and esophogastroduodenoscopy at an outpatient facility.

The patient's nurse was with him during the procedure. About a half hour afterward the nurse began engaging in verbal conversation with the patient and gave him water and toast, as she described it, to get him more awake.

After he finished the water and toast, meant to help him wake up, the nurse had him sit on the edge of the bed long enough to make sure he was stable, then assisted him to the bathroom.

The nurse helped him sit down on the toilet. She put his clothes on a chair next to the toilet. She told him she would be right outside the door if he needed help, and to call her when he was ready to stand up and get dressed.

She left the room and stood by outside with the door cracked open.

After a few minutes she heard a noise and went back into the bathroom. The patient was

standing by the sink holding his eye.

He had stood up without calling the nurse for help and had fallen against the sink. Eventually the injury to the eye from his fall cost him the sight of the eye.

In the patient's lawsuit the jury ruled the nurse was not negligent. The Court of Appeals of Iowa upheld the jury's verdict.

Versed

Post-Procedure Assessment

The court accepted testimony from two nursing experts and from the treating physician that when a patient has recovered from Versed to the point the patient can engage in conversation the patient is generally expected to be able to understand and follow verbal instructions.

It was appropriate, therefore, according to the experts, for the nurse give the patient some privacy on the toilet and to expect the patient to ask for help before standing up, as the nurse had instructed him, notwithstanding the fact he had been given Versed an hour earlier. Hupke v. Family Health Care, 2007 WL 3085793 (Iowa App., October 24, 2007).