

Diabetes Insipidus: Nurses Did Not Report Excessive Urine Output.

The fifty-four year-old patient was admitted to the hospital for treatment of low serum sodium. She had been diagnosed with diabetes insipidus.

Patient's Urine Output

10 Liters / 16 Hours

On her second day in the hospital the patient urinated more than ten liters over a sixteen-hour period. The nurses caring for the patient reportedly did not notify the attending internist of this development.

The next morning the patient's husband found her non-responsive. She remained comatose for three weeks before she died. The cause of death was brain damage from dehydration and excessive serum sodium.

A jury in the District Court, Harris County, Texas returned a verdict of \$1,400,000 and apportioned responsibility 40% to the hospital's nursing staff and 60% to the patient's internist and his medical practice group. **Estate of Dorriety v. Mehta, 2009 WL 3011575 (Dist. Ct. Harris Co., Texas, August 3, 2009).**