

Epidural Anesthetic: Nurse And Physician Failed To Monitor Their Patient.

A lawsuit filed in the Superior Court, Orange County, California was recently settled for \$4,200,000 and reported with a stipulation that the names of those involved would be kept confidential.

Anesthetic Bolus Given

Nurse, Physician Left the Room

The thirty year-old patient's labor with her first child was not progressing, so it was decided she would have a cesarean. In preparation for her cesarean a bolus of anesthetic was delivered through the epidural catheter that had been in place during her labor.

The bolus was apparently given just before hospital personnel changed shifts. No nurse or physician stayed in the labor room with the patient.

The medical experts alleged the bolus was too large and/or leaked into the intravascular or the intrathecal space. Their testimony on this point was not conclusive. There was no doubt, however, that after the bolus was given the mother went into severe respiratory distress and that no hospital medical or nursing personnel were with her in the room when her respiratory distress began.

It was not until the obstetrician happened to look at the fetal monitor read-out at the nurses station that anyone picked up on the mother's dire status.

A crash cesarean was done and the baby was born basically unaffected by the incident.

However, the mother is now in an irreversible vegetative state. She will likely live out the remainder of her life expectancy in a skilled nursing facility. The cost of a lifetime of skilled care for her accounts for the magnitude of the settlement. **Confidential v. Confidential, 2007 WL 2983130 (Sup. Ct. Orange Co. California, August 10, 2007).**