

LEGAL EAGLE EYE NEWSLETTER

December 2006

For the Nursing Profession

Volume 14 Number 12

Nasogastric Tube: Feeding Continued While Position Still Being Checked, Patient Dies.

The patient was admitted to the hospital for respiratory problems. A nasogastric tube was inserted to provide nourishment.

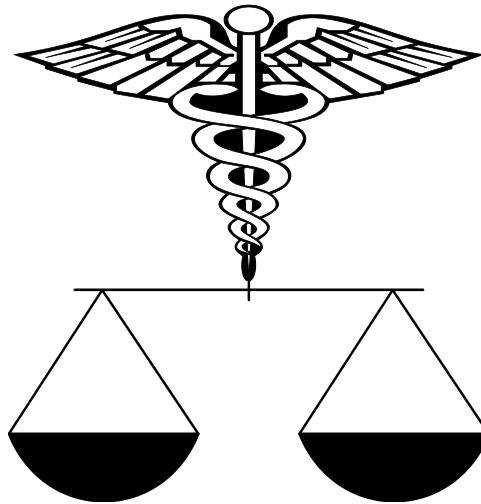
The tube became occluded after some period of use and had to be removed and replaced by the nursing staff. An x-ray was ordered to confirm correct placement.

The x-ray showed it was not correctly placed, that is, it extended down the trachea into the lung rather than down the esophagus into the stomach. The feeding tube was removed and replaced and another x-ray was taken.

While reading of the second x-ray was still pending the nurses resumed infusing nourishment through the tube. In fact, the tube had again been inserted into the lung.

Infusion of nourishment into the lung seriously compounded the patient's respiratory problems and she died.

The Court of Appeals of Arkansas wrestled with legal technicalities involved in continuing the lawsuit against the hospital's corporate parent after the hospital itself had settled with the family for the consequences of the nurses' negligence. Lee v. Quorum Health Resources, 2006 WL 3222648 (Ark. App., November 8, 2006).



The allegations in the patient's family's lawsuit went beyond the negligence of the nurses.

The lawsuit also found fault with the communication processes within the hospital between the medical and nursing staff. That would tend to indicate a more widespread problem that a simple error or omission by the nursing staff.

COURT OF APPEALS OF ARKANSAS
November 8, 2006

Inside this month's issue ...

December 2006

New Subscriptions
See Page 3

Nasogastric Tube - Endotracheal Tube - Alzheimer's/Wanderer
Narcotics Diversion - Disability Discrimination/Accommodation
Patient Falls/No Fall Plan/No Bed Alarm/Large Verdict
Skilled Nursing Regulations/Restraints/Skin Care/Incontinence Care
Lap Sponge Left In Patient - Scalding Hot Tea Spilled On Patient
Hypoglycemic Episode/School Nurse - Nursing Documentation
Premature Infant/IV Sites - Advance Directives/Resuscitation
Nurse As Whistleblower - Patient Transport - Patient Transfer