

Nasogastric Tube Misplaced: Large Verdict For Patient's Death.

The sixty-four year-old patient had a benign rectal tumor surgically removed.

During the procedure his physicians started a nasogastric tube. In hindsight, after the error was discovered three days later, the tube was lodged in a lung rather than in the stomach.

The physicians and their medical groups paid settlements to the family, exact amounts kept confidential, for the patient's wrongful death.

The case then went to trial in the District Court, Jefferson County, Texas against the hospital for the nurses' negligence.

Fluid from the tube in the lung caused pneumonia.

Pneumonia caused coughing.

Coughing dehisced the surgical wound.

Dehiscence necessitated a second surgery.

The patient died the next day.

DISTRICT COURT, JEFFERSON COUNTY
TEXAS

November 26, 2007

The jury valued the family's loss at more than two million dollars and held the hospital responsible for 60% of that sum.

The jury accepted the premise that the hospital's nurses had an ongoing responsibility, independent of the physicians, to verify the correct placement of the nasogastric tube before introducing fluids or nutrients, given the known risk and severe possible consequences if it was not right. ***Thomas v. Baptist Hosp.***, 2007 WL 4590422 (Dist. Ct. Jefferson Co., Texas, November 26, 2007).