

Huntington's Chorea: Care Faulted Because Of Poor Nursing Documentation.

The patient died at age thirty-eight with Huntington's Chorea. The immediate cause of death was sepsis from methicillin-resistant staph infection in a sacral skin ulcer.

The Court of Appeal of California noted that Huntington's is a progressive genetic degenerative condition for which there is no cure which is usually fatal within ten to fifteen years. It places the patient at high risk for skin breakdown.

When she entered the rehab facility her skin was basically intact. Her care plan nevertheless called for frequent repositioning, daily monitoring of skin integrity and for her physician and family to be notified of redness or skin breakdown.

When the patient was admitted to the hospital the patient had lacerations on her toes and feet with poor skin condition on both buttocks. Her heel was bruised and had areas of redness.

The rehab center where she came from, however, had no documentation of her skin condition.

COURT OF APPEAL OF CALIFORNIA
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The court found telling evidence to support the family's lawsuit against the rehab facility. Documentation of major loss of skin integrity, which was obvious when she was taken from the rehab facility to a hospital, was not even mentioned in her chart at the rehab facility. The court reasoned that the facility could not have been taking care of her needs. Sababin v. Superior Court, 2006 WL 2615418 (Cal. App., September 13, 2006).