

LEGAL EAGLE EYE NEWSLETTER

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Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis, Nurse Practitioner Ruled At Fault.

The patient had been seeing a family nurse practitioner for her general health care for a year before a psychiatric nurse practitioner in the same clinic started her on Lamictal for depression.

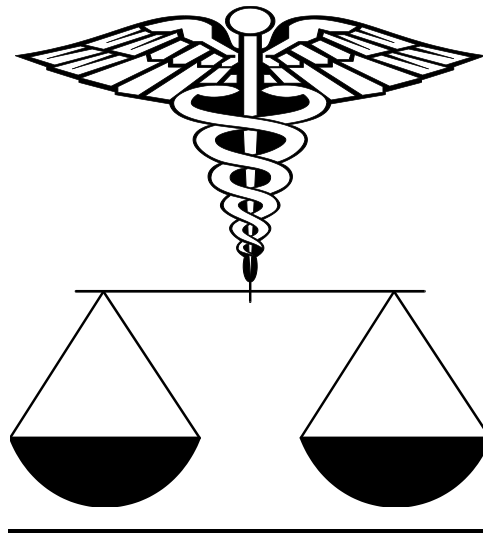
A week after she started taking the Lamictal she went back and saw her family nurse practitioner for high blood pressure. Lamictal was on the medication list. Reference materials were readily available in the clinic to look up medications like Lamictal but the family nurse practitioner did not do so.

Two weeks after that the patient came back for body aches and was prescribed an antibiotic.

Four weeks after starting the Lamictal the patient phoned her family nurse practitioner to report a skin rash.

The nurse practitioner believed the rash was medication-related and reportedly reviewed the medication list in the clinic chart, saw that the patient was taking Lamictal, did not know any of that drug's potential side effects and did nothing further to educate herself about the drug's potential side effects.

A few days after finishing the antibiotic the patient phoned the family nurse practitioner to report that the skin rash was still bothering her. When the patient came to the clinic the family nurse practitioner prescribed a glucocorticoid used to treat inflammation.



The family nurse practitioner testified she believed she was responsible only for knowing the potential side effects of medications she prescribed for her patients.

She said she believed she did not have to consider the potential side effects of medications her patients were taking that were prescribed by other health care providers.

MISSOURI COURT OF APPEALS
November 12, 2014

The family nurse practitioner referred the patient to a dermatologist who saw her that day and told her to discontinue the Lamictal immediately.

Two days later the patient was hospitalized with Stevens-Johnson Syndrome which progressed to toxic epidermal necrolysis. Her hospitalization lasted more than three weeks.

Although the psychiatric nurse practitioner and the family nurse practitioner were both employees of the same clinic, the patient's lawsuit faulted only the family nurse practitioner.

The Missouri Court of Appeals upheld a \$525,000 jury verdict in the patient's favor.

The Court pointed to the family nurse practitioner's own damning testimony that she believed she was only responsible for knowing and taking precautions as to the potential side effects of medications she prescribed, and was not responsible for medications prescribed by other providers.

The Court said that standard reference materials available to the family nurse practitioner would have alerted her to Stevens-Johnson Syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis as possible side effects of a medication she knew her patient was taking. ***Huelskamp v. Patients First***, __ S.W. 3d __, 2014 WL 5840020 (Mo. App., November 12, 2014).

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