

Withdrawal From Alcohol: IV Na Monitored, No Liability Found.

The fifty-six year-old patient, reportedly an alcoholic, came to the hospital's emergency room for detoxification.

Blood tests in the E.R. disclosed a serum sodium of only 101 mEq/L so she was admitted for gradual IV sodium replenishment.

Two days later the patient's serum sodium increased by 8 mEq/L between blood draws, so the internist stopped the sodium IV.

The patient developed central pontine myelinolysis, a brainstem injury which has left her in a coma. She was transferred to an extended-care facility.

The jury in the Supreme Court, Orange County, New York found no fault with the patient's caregivers. The jury apparently accepted the hospital's experts' testimony that IV sodium replenishment was indicated and that the necessarily gradual rate of replenishment was appropriately monitored. **Estate of Beck v. Pine, 2009 WL 2998251 (Sup. Ct. Orange Co., New York, June 16, 2009).**