

Anemic Patient Left Unattended In Shower: Hospital Pays Settlement For Nurses Aide's Negligence.

The sixty-two year-old patient was admitted to the hospital for generalized weakness, memory loss, confusion, bilateral pedal edema and unsteady gait.

Lab tests disclosed severe thrombocytopenia, anemia and hyperglobulinemia.

The initial nursing assessment was that he had an increased risk of falling.

The patient reportedly asked the aide assigned to assist him with activities of daily living to allow him to go and shower by himself, and the aide agreed.

While in the shower by himself the patient fell. He sustained a subdural hematoma from which he died three months later.

His family filed suit in the Superior Court, Los Angeles County, California. The hospital paid \$107,500 to settle before trial, on top of \$150,000 paid by the physician who provided post-injury treatment.

Aide Violated Hospital Policy

The hospital reportedly had a strict policy that patients were never to be left alone in the bathroom, a policy which the aide violated.

A traditional battle of the expert witnesses would not have occurred in court if the case had not settled. When a facility's own internal patient-safety policies are violated it is superfluous for the patient or the family to have to bring in experts to establish the prevailing standard of care.

The lawsuit went on to fault the professional nursing staff over training and supervision of non-licensed caregivers.

It was also claimed the patient's nurses were slow to advocate for a full medical assessment after his fall. **Bass v. Mitchell, 2008 WL 2189931 (Sup. Ct. Los Angeles Co., California, April 23, 2008).**