

Acute Asthma Attack: Nurse's Error Led To Brain Damage.

The judge in the US District Court for the Middle District of Florida awarded more than \$4,000,000 from the US government for hypoxic brain damage suffered during an acute asthmatic episode by a nine year-old military dependent in a US military base hospital E.R.

Solu-Medrol and magnesium sulfate and breathing treatments with albuterol were not opening his airway so that he could breathe on his own. The patient was becoming combative from lack of oxygen. Lidocaine and Ketamine were given in preparation for rapid sequence intubation.

Nurse Gave Succinylcholine Contrary to Hospital Policy

Then the nurse went ahead and gave the succinylcholine, which almost immediately paralyzed the respiratory muscles.

It was clearly contrary to policy at the facility for the nurse to give succinylcholine, as opposed to the physician doing the intubation, a fact pointed out by the court as one of the bases for finding negligence was committed.

No one started bagging the boy's mouth for four minutes. Then it took almost twenty more minutes to intubate him, during which time he went into full-blown cardiac arrest. He now suffers from brain damage from oxygen deprivation.

Besides the nurse's error the court faulted the whole treatment team for rapid sequence intubation not being started until twelve minutes after the E.R. physician first determined that the medications were not opening his airway. **Turner v. US, 2008 WL 2726508 (M.D. Fla., July 1, 2008).**