

Internal Bleeding: Nurse Faulted For Not Taking, Recording Vital Signs.

The patient was brought to the emergency department with severe injuries from a motor vehicle accident.

Paramedics had been unable to get a blood pressure at the scene, but then got a pressure of 146/50 after they started IV fluids during transport.

At the hospital attempts were made to arrange for a suitable blood transfusion while CT scans were ordered and read. He was treated for almost two hours before he expired.

Where Were The Nurse's Vital Signs?

The medical records did not indicate that the emergency department nurse was taking vital signs.

In the family's lawsuit against the hospital, the family's medical expert testified the patient died from internal bleeding. That could not be confirmed or ruled out definitively because the family declined an autopsy on religious grounds.

The family's medical expert went on to say that the nurse's failure to take vital signs contributed to the physicians' failure to appreciate the true nature and gravity of the patient's medical condition, that is, that he was bleeding internally.

In court the nurse was allowed to testify she did in fact take vital signs q 5 – 10 minutes and scribbled them on pieces of paper which she put in her pockets and was not able to copy into the chart.

The Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division, threw out the verdict that came out in the hospital's favor. The court ruled it was unfair to the family for this version of the events first to surface in trial and ordered a new trial after the nurse's assertions could be investigated. **Gorcey v. Jersey Shore Medical Center, 2006 WL 533379 (N.J. Super., March 6, 2006).**