

Involuntary Restraint: Court Dismisses Suit.

The patient had a history of multiple psychiatric admissions at the same hospital. Her diagnoses included dissociative identity disorder and substance abuse. She had eloped from the same hospital on a previous psych admission and was caught by hospital security and escorted back. She also had a history of self-mutilation.

This time she had an argument with her domestic partner, started drinking and then slashed her own arm with a kitchen knife. Paramedics took her to the hospital.

At the hospital she was placed in four-point restraints on orders from a psychiatric resident on duty.

The rationale for restraining her was to allow the nurses and a physician's assistant to treat her wound, to prevent further self-harm and to prevent elopement.

The emergency room nurse gave her an IM injection of Ativan. Once the patient calmed down the nurse removed the restraint strap on the patient's injured arm for her comfort.

The Superior Court of Connecticut agreed with the patient that Federal regulations do grant every hospital patient the right to be free from restraints of any form imposed as a means of coercion, discipline or for staff convenience or as retaliation by staff. Still she had no grounds to sue.

In this case use of restraints was backed by a physician's order, as required by law, and was directly related to fulfillment of the patient's physical and mental treatment needs. **Hanson v. Hospital of Saint Raphael**, 2007 WL 2317825 (Conn. Super., July 20, 2007).