

IV Needle Negligence Insertion

According to the Court of Appeal of Louisiana, there is no recognized standard for the specific number of unsuccessful attempts a nurse may make at inserting an IV needle before the nurse will be deemed guilty of negligence.

In this case the emergency room physician ordered IV fluids for dehydration and to open a line so that Phenergan could be administered to the patient.

The nurse tried once unsuccessfully to strike the vein in the patient's right arm, then tried twice to strike a vein in her right hand before striking the vein successfully in the right hand on the third try.

The court ruled this was not negligent even though it was hospital policy for a nurse to call another nurse or a physician after two unsuccessful attempts.

The court also felt the patient's claim she contracted reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD) from the three unsuccessful IV insertion attempts was too speculative to support a lawsuit for damages, even if the nurse had been negligent. Coleman v. East Jefferson General Hospital, 742 So. 2d 1044 (La. App., 1999).

The nurse did not deviate from any nursing standard recognized in the community, even though this hospital had a higher standard.

Multiple needle sticks are not uncommon when a nurse is attempting to get an intravenous line properly situated in a patient's vein for IV therapy.

COURT OF APPEAL OF LOUISIANA, 1999.
