

Labor & Delivery: Nurses Faulted, Kept Patient's Legs Flexed.

The patient sued the hospital claiming that her nurse midwife and the three registered nurses who assisted the midwife kept her legs in an extreme hyperflexed position for too long a time without any medical reason, resulting in hip, back and leg injuries.

The patient reportedly was in severe pain afterward and had to ambulate on crutches until her injuries resolved.

According to the record in the Appeals Court of Massachusetts, the patient's caregivers were employing the McRoberts maneuver to facilitate her delivery.

Use of the McRoberts maneuver was not necessary in the first place during this patient's delivery, according to the patient's nursing expert, and even if it was necessary it was continued for too long without respite. The nurse midwife is responsible for supervising and directing the nurses assisting in the delivery. O'Hare v. Bastarache, 2009 WL 2461240 (Mass. App., August 13, 2009).

Care must be taken when performing the McRoberts or other maneuvers used to facilitate delivery to avoid prolonged and overly aggressive pressure on the legs in the hyperflexed position.

The fibrocartilaginous articular surfaces of the symphysis pubis and surrounding ligaments can be unduly stretched and undue pressure can be exerted on the mother's legs, hips, abdomen and back.

APPEALS COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
August 13, 2009