

Obstructed Bowel: Hospital's Nurses Blamed For Failing To Contact The Physician.

The thirty year-old patient, fourteen weeks pregnant at the time, called an ambulance to take her to the hospital from a business function because she was having severe abdominal pain.

The E.R. physician suspected complications from her pregnancy but an ob/gyn ruled that out and consulted with a general surgeon about the possibility of a partial bowel obstruction.

The nurses on the postpartum unit, where the E.R. physician had her transferred, cared for her during the first night in the hospital. At 1:30 a.m. her blood pressure was 87/52, having been 126/72 earlier, her pain increased to 9/10 and she requested morphine.

At 5:10 a.m. she went into shock and was transferred to the ICU. An ultrasound discovered that her fetus had died.

Early that same afternoon the surgeons found that the patient's ischemic and by then necrotic intestine was twisted around her superior mesenteric artery.

The nurses should have notified the physician when the patient's blood pressure dropped significantly and she reported an increase in her pain and asked for morphine.

CIRCUIT COURT
DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
October 26, 2010

After the patient's baby was found to have died the patient had a major portion of her small intestine removed and eventually had to have a liver transplant.

The jury in the Circuit Court, DuPage County, Illinois ruled the hospital's nurses 100% at fault and ruled that the physicians were not at fault. The patient was awarded \$11,500,000 as damages from the hospital. Miller v. Edwards Hosp., 2010 WL 5086604 (Cir. Ct. DuPage Co., Illinois, October 26, 2010).