

Prenatal Care: Court Faults Clinic's Practices For Screening Patients Re Current Medications.

The patient came to the ob/gyn clinic after a positive home pregnancy test. She was six weeks pregnant. She was started on prenatal vitamins and told to follow up.

In the civil lawsuit which ensued after her baby died shortly after delivery the patient testified she told the physician she was on Prozac, Wellbutrin and Benicar and that the physician told her it was all right to continue with all of her current medications.

Benicar is an angiotensin II receptor antagonist used to control high blood pressure. Contraindications have been published against its use during pregnancy.

The physician testified he told the patient to discontinue the Benicar, but that conversation was not documented in the chart.

It is a nursing as well as a medical responsibility to question a prenatal patient about the medications she is taking, to know which medications are not appropriate during pregnancy and to counsel the patient accordingly.

Procedures are needed in a clinic to double-check that each prenatal patient's current medications have been ascertained and documented in the chart.

SUPREME COURT OF ALABAMA
June 12, 2009

The Supreme Court of Alabama threw out a multi-million dollar jury verdict in the patient's favor and ordered the case to be re-tried.

The court agreed with the jury that the clinic's nurses and the physician did not live up to standards of care. They had independent responsibilities to screen the medications the patient was taking and to advise the patient to discontinue anything contraindicated or even ill-advised during pregnancy.

Nevertheless, a pivotal medical expert testified that stopping the Benicar *possibly could have* saved the baby but balked at saying it *probably would have* saved the baby.

Only that the bad outcome *possibly could have* been avoided is insufficient proof in a medical malpractice case. **Mobile Ob-Gyn P.C. v. Baggett, ___ So. 3d ___, 2009 WL 1643350 (Ala., June 12, 2009).**