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Medication Errors: HOW THEY ARE MADE AND WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU

When we are sick and we go see our doctor, we want to get better. We trust that the medication prescribed by our doctor is going to help us get better or, at least, prevent us from getting worse. And, in most cases, our trust is well placed – unless the doctor or pharmacist makes a mistake. Then, the consequences of the medication error can be dangerous or fatal.

Some of the medication mistakes commonly made by doctors include:

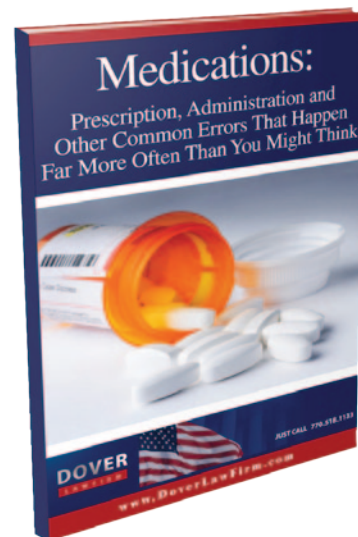
- Not knowing enough about the patient. For example, the doctor may have failed to get a complete medical history, inquire about other drugs that the patient is taking, or failed to run enough tests to make an accurate diagnosis.
- Not communicating well with the pharmacist. The doctor's handwriting or use of abbreviations may result in the pharmacist misinterpreting the intended prescription.

Doctors aren't the only ones who can cause a serious medication error. Pharmacists also make mistakes, such as:

- Not keeping up-to-date on recalls and potentially adverse effects
- Not labeling the medication appropriately for the patient
- Providing the wrong medication to the wrong patient
- Not properly mixing or diluting medication according to FDA guidelines, manufacturer guidelines, and doctor instructions

If you are ever harmed by a medication mistake, call our office to speak with one of our experienced attorneys. We understand that we can't take away the physical and emotional consequences from an error that should never have occurred. But, we may be able to help you sleep better at night by securing your financial recovery and easing the financial burden created by your doctor's or pharmacist's mistake.

To learn more about drug errors, please go to www.DoverLawFirm and request our free report, **Medications: Prescription, Administration & Other Common Errors.** ■



WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING

I have been dealing with attorneys for 35 years and they always seem to have a hard time returning phone calls. That was not the case at the Dover Law Firm, my calls always got answered. I wouldn't have been able to fight this case on my own, it would have required too much involvement of my own and I was in need of good legal service. I will be sending my friends and family to the Dover Law Firm.

Marion Coggins
Cumming, Georgia

Tigers show their true colors

South Korean and Chinese researchers recently uncovered the secret of the white tiger: one solitary mutation in a single pigment gene. White tigers aren't albinos; these amazing felines still produce dark pigment, as evidenced by their black stripes. However, a genetic mutation suppresses the expression of the more familiar orange coat.



Researchers mapped a small piece of the genomes of a family of 16 tigers spanning two generations in Chimelong Safari Park, China, both white and orange, then mapped the complete genome of the three parents of the family. After some extensive detective work, a single pigment gene, affectionately known as SLC45A2, was pinpointed as the less-than-colorful suspect.

White tigers are only found in captivity today, with the last known free-ranging one being shot in 1958. There is evidence that white tigers roamed the Indian subcontinent as far back as the 1500s.

Zoos that try breeding white tigers often resort to inbreeding, which greatly elevates the risk of premature deaths, stillbirths, and deformities. This is where the notion was sprung that the white gene coat was a deformity itself. But the new research has shown that it's a natural variation—rare but natural.

The new research may be useful for those who want to breed healthy white tigers in captivity. Many feel it's worth considering reintroducing white tigers into the wild once again, as white tigers have been shown to be part of the natural genetic diversity of the family of tigers as a whole. ■

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Q: Is the rear driver in a rear-end collision always at fault?

A: No. While experience has led most courts to this assumption, there are certainly circumstances in which a lead driver is found to be at fault for a rear-end collision. If another vehicle turns or merges in front of you too suddenly, does so without signaling, or fails to maintain proper speed and a collision results, they are at fault so long as you can establish that you were not speeding or otherwise violating traffic laws. Also, if the other driver reverses into you in a manner that violates traffic laws, liability rests squarely with them. ■



CASE RECAP

Delayed Diagnosis of Colorectal Cancer Caused by Misread Barium Enema

The Dover Law Firm represented a 56-year-old male and his surviving family in a wrongful death claim after a radiologist failed to diagnose our client's rectal cancer. Our client had gone to his family doctor because he was suffering from rectal bleeding and was then referred to the defendant radiologist. The defendant radiologist performed a barium enema and interpreted the results as normal. However, our client continued to experience rectal bleeding and complained to his doctor.

Sixteen months after the barium enema, our client's family doctor referred him to a gastroenterologist, who performed a colonoscopy. The procedure revealed a large 4-centimeter lesion 4.5 cm above the anal verge. The cancer was shown to be Stage IV adenocarcinoma of the rectum and had metastasized (spread) to the liver.

Our client then contacted the Dover Law Firm. We arranged for an expert radiologist to review the barium enema. The expert discovered a large filling defect suspicious for cancer in the area where the cancer was ultimately found during colonoscopy. Our client sued the defendant radiologist for failure to diagnose his cancer and loss of chance of a cure. Unfortunately, soon after this our client passed away, and his surviving family then filed a wrongful death claim. Our firm was able to obtain a settlement in the case before it went to trial. ■

Depression in the elderly

Feeling sad or blue sometimes is a natural part of life. But when sadness persists and begins to interfere with everyday activities, depression may loom large.

Depression is a medical illness, just like diabetes and heart disease, and must be treated by a medical professional. It is not a natural part of aging. Depression touches the lives of 15 percent of adults over age 65 in the United States. The elderly are most at risk for taking their own life, accounting for more than 25 percent of suicides in this country.

Some elderly people keep to themselves about how they're feeling, fearing they will be looked upon as "crazy" or that they're weak, leaving other family members in the dark. Untreated depression may last for months and even years.

Signs of depression include withdrawing from social activities, neglecting personal appearance, weight loss, an obvious lack of sleep, and complaints of physical pain without any apparent explanation.

Triggers for depression include chronic or serious illness, the death of a loved one, or loss of job through layoff or retirement. Additionally, diminished vision or hearing, loss of mobility, and a significant change in environment may spur depression as well, among other factors. Because depression is caused by biological changes in the brain, sometimes nothing "needs" to happen for it to occur.

The good news is that depression is highly treatable. If you are a family member of a senior who's suffering from depression, recognizing its symptoms may play a key role in your loved one's recovery. ■



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Medication Errors. See p. 1.

This publication is intended to educate the general public about personal injury, medical malpractice, and other issues. It is for information purposes only and is not intended to be legal advice. Prior to acting on any information contained here, you should seek and retain competent counsel. The information in this newsletter may be freely copied and distributed as long as the newsletter is copied in its entirety.

Cut out this accident checklist and place it in your vehicle ↘

Auto Accident Checklist

If you are ever involved in a car wreck, it's important to know what you should and shouldn't do. We've created this handy accident checklist for you to keep in your car. We hope you never need to use it, but if you do, we hope that you find it helpful.

- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Check for injuries (but do not move a seriously injured person unless they are in further danger because of traffic or other circumstances).
- ☐ Call the local police.
- ☐ Promptly seek medical attention and accept emergency care.
- ☐ Obtain the key information (license plate, insurance, address, phone number, type of car, etc.) from each of the drivers involved as well as witnesses.
- ☐ Do not give a recorded statement or sign any paperwork with the other side's insurance company.
- ☐ Do not admit wrongdoing or fault.
- ☐ Document all that you can. Take photographs if at all possible.
- ☐ Let your insurance company know about the accident even if it was not your fault.
- ☐ Consult with an experienced car wreck attorney to protect your rights.

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