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Hospital misdiagnosed woman's life-threatening drug reaction after knee replacement surgery

In late 2009, Jane Doe scheduled knee replacement surgery. During surgery, her orthopedic surgeon implanted an antibiotic spacer containing vancomycin. After the procedure, Jane began experiencing an unexplained rash. It began to worsen and, alarmed, she visited her local hospital three separate times. Each time, she was discharged. On her next visit to the hospital, she exhibited symptoms of a maculopapular rash, with swelling, spots, and sloughing off of skin. The hospital specifically noted that her rash was "consistent with Stevens Johnson Syndrome (SJS)," and they ordered a skin biopsy to rule out SJS. Unfortunately, the hospital cancelled the biopsy order and discharged Jane with the wrong diagnosis of "Red Man's Syndrome." SJS is a life-threatening condition usually caused by a drug reaction. Symptoms are similar to that of a burn victim – bumpy rash and sloughing skin. It should have been treated as a medical emergency requiring hospitalization.

After the last discharge, Jane's condition worsened and she again returned to the hospital. Upon arrival, her condition began to significantly deteriorate until an advocate insisted that she be transferred to a different hospital.

At the second hospital, Jane was placed in a medically-induced coma in the burn unit. Her condition continued to deteriorate to the extent that she sustained multi-system organ failure impacting 95% of her body. Miraculously, Jane survived this ordeal.

Seeking accountability for the inappropriate care she had received, Jane and her husband asked SDSBS attorneys **Brian Denney** and **Cal Warriner** to represent them in a legal action against the first hospital that failed to treat her properly, the infectious disease doctor attending her, and other hospital staff. The attorneys hired medical experts, took sworn depositions of the defendants, and then noticed the case for trial. At mediation prior to trial, the case was settled for a confidential sum, compensating Mr. and Mrs. Doe for the enormous suffering they had endured. ♦

After a number of misdiagnoses, Jane's condition continued to deteriorate to the extent that she sustained multi-system organ failure impacting 95% of her body.
