

**ONDINE'S CURSE - GENETIC AND IATROGENIC CENTRAL HYPOVENTILATION AS DIAGNOSIS OPTION IN FORENSIC MEDICINE**

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In Nordic mythology a man, after he had been cursed by a water nymph, an ondine, lost the ability to breathe without remembering it and died after falling asleep. Family medicine is familiar with broad spectrum of sleep disorders, popularly called by patients with the term ondine's curse, but in medical science this term relates to conditions that have as common denominator a seemingly spontaneous onset of life-threatening hypoventilation. Physiology and genetics specialists focus mainly on congenital central hypoventilation syndrome (CCHS), which is being linked to a row of coexisting genetic abnormalities. Anesthesiologists on the other hand are more interested in the iatrogenic condition - they call the same name - that appears when the patient previously subjected to general anesthesia, after temporarily waking up and regaining the spontaneous respiratory drive, after some time falls back into unconsciousness and develops hypoventilation - due to delayed anesthetics release back into the bloodstream from patient's fat tissue where it has been stored since general anesthesia has been administered. Forensic medicine specialists have to consider the latter from both situations more often, as they investigate sudden unexpected deaths after surgery and general anesthesia, in post-operational care period - and it happens that those cases fall into category of medical malpractice related deaths.