



## Hospital deaths files scrutinised

**Police files relating to the deaths of 28 elderly patients at a Hampshire hospital have been passed to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).**

The force's investigation into Gosport War Memorial Hospital came after the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) criticised its prescribing practices.

The CPS will now review the evidence to decide what charges, if any, are to be brought, Hampshire Constabulary said.

Bereaved families say 'over-prescribed' sedatives led to many of the deaths.

**We hope, on behalf of the other families, that the case will proceed so that our questions about the hospital will be answered**

Mrs Paule Ripley, wife of a former patient

Initially, 90 deaths were examined in relation to the treatment of patients in the 1990s, but this number was reduced to 28 in November last year.

Ann Alexander, of Alexander Harris solicitors represented more than 300 families in the Harold Shipman investigation.

She was approached two years ago by the families of 24 patients who died at the hospital and one living former patient Jim Ripley.

Mr Ripley, 80, a former dockyard worker from Gosport, was recuperating from arthritis and bursitis at the hospital in April 2000, when he began hallucinating. On 8 April he became unconscious.

His wife Paule claims the doctor originally suspected he had suffered a stroke but after he was transferred to another hospital he was diagnosed as having suffered an analgesic coma caused by over-prescription of morphine.

Mrs Ripley, 67, said: "The police have not been in contact with us but we believe, through our solicitors, that our case is not proceeding but we hope, on behalf of the other families, that the case will proceed so that our questions about the hospital will be answered."

Hampshire and Isle of Wight NHS Health Authority has said that concerns raised by the CHI had been addressed.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/hampshire/4265395.stm>

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