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Go

BBC NEWS

You are in: **England**

News Front Page

Sunday, 22 September, 2002, 14:39 GMT 15:39 UK

World

Families in hospital deaths complaint

UK

England

N Ireland

Scotland

Wales

Politics

Business

Entertainment

Science/Nature

Technology

Health

Education

Talking Point

Country Profiles

In Depth

Programmes

BBC SPORT

BBC WEATHER

CBBC NEWS

SERVICES

Daily E-mail

News Ticker

Mobile/PDAs

Text Only

Feedback

Help

EDITIONS

Change to World



Hampshire police investigated the deaths

Families of people who died at a hospital criticised for putting patients at risk are to make a complaint to the General Medical Council (GMC).

The families have joined together to form the Gosport Memorial Hospital Action Group.

They are represented by a top lawyer who will question a decision by the police to end an inquiry into the deaths.

A Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) investigation concluded doctors at the hospital regularly over-prescribed powerful painkillers.

The report published in July, could not confirm whether any patients died as a result, but said patients were "put at risk".

Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust - which ran the hospital at the time - was criticised for not reviewing procedures earlier.

The CHI said a police investigation, patient complaints and internal data should have alerted the trust to problems.

The CHI said the trust failed to have the appropriate systems in place at the time of nine deaths in 1998, to monitor the practice of some staff at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

“
I believe the events which occurred at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital give rise for serious cause for concern
”

Ann Alexander,
solicitor

Southampton

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Police investigation

The action group's solicitor, Ann Alexander, said the families had raised concerns about the treatment of relatives at the hospital.

"I believe the events which occurred at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital give rise for serious cause for concern," she said.

The police investigation into deaths at the hospital was discontinued.

Relatives complain it was not thorough enough.

Their complaints are now being investigated.

Harold Shipman

But Hampshire police said the Crown Prosecution Service consistently advised there were no grounds for prosecution.

Miss Alexander said she would be considering whether the police decision to end the inquiry was reasonable.

She said there was "no doubt" the action group would be making a complaint to the GMC.

Miss Alexander represented families at the inquiry into the activities of Harold Shipman.

The hospital has adopted new procedures under its new management by the Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust.

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