



No charges over hospital deaths

No one will face prosecution over the deaths of 10 elderly patients at a Hampshire hospital.

The deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital between the late 1990s and 2002 were the subject of a lengthy investigation by Hampshire police.

Some families claimed that patients had died after sedatives like diamorphine were over-prescribed by staff.

But the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said there was insufficient evidence to prosecute any person over the deaths.

Errors alone do not, of themselves, amount to gross negligence

Paul Close, CPS

Hampshire Police conducted two investigations into the deaths, the first of which is the subject of complaints to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

The second investigation, which looked into the deaths of 90 patients, resulted in 10 files being passed to the CPS.

Paul Close, of the CPS, said: "I considered whether the evidence gathered by the police showed that a criminal offence had been committed, and particularly the offence of gross negligence manslaughter.

"After looking at all the evidence - including that of experts - and seeking the advice of counsel, I decided there was insufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction.

"Errors alone, no matter how catastrophic the consequences may be, do not, of themselves, amount to gross negligence.

"I have written to the families explaining my decision and offering my deepest sympathy for their bereavement.

"I have offered to meet them to discuss how I reached my decision."

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/hampshire/6194891.stm>

Published: 2006/12/19 18:15:44 GMT

© BBC MMVIII