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NEWS

GOSPORT

GMC disagrees with panel's decision on Hampshire GP

Clare Dyer BMJ

A GP who prescribed potentially hazardous doses of sedatives and painkillers to elderly patients has been found guilty of "multiple instances" of serious professional misconduct by a General Medical Council panel but is allowed to continue practising.

The fitness to practise panel decided that Jane Barton should not be struck off but should be permitted to practise, subject to conditions that will be attached to her registration for three years.

In an unusual though not unprecedented move the GMC was quick to state its disagreement with the panel's decision. It thought she should have been struck off and could support an application by the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence for a High Court ruling that the sanction is unduly lenient.



Dr Jane Barton can continue to practise

The Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence said that it had called for the fitness to practise panel's transcripts and would announce its decision in due course.

Dr Barton's role as clinical assistant at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in Hampshire from 1996 to 1999 was at the centre of an investigation that saw the police look

into 92 deaths. The GMC hearing followed an inquest last year into 10 deaths that concluded that prescribed drugs had been a factor in five.

Dr Barton, who still practises as a GP in Hampshire, said, "Anyone following this case carefully will know that I was faced with an excessive and increasing burden in trying to care for patients at the Gosport War Memorial. I did the best I could for my patients."

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OR DEATH!

