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NHS Trust

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Mrs A Turner
Complaints Manager
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166 Fareham Road
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Dear Ann

Complaint – late

Many thanks for asking me to comment on the notes of They are quite a brief set, with a particularly scant "Medical" section.

Essentially, he was a 65yr old gentleman, who had clearly suffered a moderately severe stroke, on a background of hypertension, cardiac failure and diabetes. Nonetheless, he was transferred to Gosport War Memorial Hospital for attempts at rehabilitation. However, he clearly deteriorated within twenty-four hours of arriving, but the precise cause of this cannot be ascertained from the brief set of notes available to me. There is no detailed account of the way he had deteriorated, and no record of an examination by a Doctor in any detail.

What is clear, is that after sudden deterioration, he was commenced on an infusion of Diamorphine and Midazolam, administered by the subcutaneous route. His condition deteriorated further and he sadly died.

I am concerned about the entry in the notes on 26th April 1999 by the ward doctor, a Dr Barton, I understand, who wrote in her initial clerking on 26.4.99 - "please make comfortable." This is an unusual thing to write regarding a patient transferred for rehabilitation, and could, of course, be interpreted in two different ways, i.e. physically ensure his comfort & needs are met, (which would be the norm in any event,) or might imply that he was not for any aggressive medical treatment, though this was not made explicit. I was also concerned about the next sentence saying "I am happy for the Nursing staff to confirm death" – which again, implies that death in the near future would not be unexpected. I would be surprised if this was the case for a patient apparently transferred for rehabilitation, particularly if the family had not been made aware of this, and certainly the notes did not imply this was a likely near event.

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Complaint – late **Code A** contd.

In summary, I think there are some causes for concern in the brevity of the notes, my anxiety regarding the aims of treatment documented on the 26th April 1999 by the Ward based doctor, and precisely how clear the situation was made to **Code A** family, both on transfer and after his subsequent deterioration.

I am also further concerned about the medical assessment when he deteriorated on 27.4.99, as the notes are, in my opinion, too brief to be sure as to in what way he had deteriorated and what the best treatment might be.

I hope this information is helpful - please do not hesitate to get in touch again if I can be of any further help.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Code A

Graeme Dewhurst