

Fareham and Gosport **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

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2 December 2002

Mrs Ripley

Code A

Dear Mrs Ripley

I am writing further to my letter of the 12 October 2002. I apologise for the delay.

I am now able to respond to your concerns regarding your husband's in-patient stay at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in April 2000.

Mr Ripley's stay in hospital was clearly very upsetting for you and continues to cause you distress. I am sorry you are still concerned with the care he received.

Your letter raised very specific questions particularly in relation to your husband's pain control and the medication he was given. I will respond to each of these in order.

Medication to alleviate pain

Mr Ripley was admitted to Gosport War Memorial Hospital from the Accident and Emergency Department at Haslar Hospital on the evening of 4 April 2000.

On 4th April 2000 Mr Ripley was given 10mg MST (Morphine) at 9.35pm almost immediately following admission. Mr Ripley's care plan clearly indicated that his joints were painful. His medication chart shows he was given regular analgesics in an attempt to control his pain.

On 5th April 2000 Mr Ripley was given Co-codamol which is a combination of codeine and paracetamol at 05.15 hours and a further dose of MST 10 mgs at 08.10. A further dose of Co-codamol was administered at 1.30pm and 11.50pm on the 5th April 2000.

On the 6th April Mr Ripley was given Co-codamol as above but this was changed from an as required prescription to a regular dosage on the 7 April 2002.

The prescription for MST was discontinued on the 7th April 2002.

Diclofenac suppositories were prescribed on the 5 April in conjunction with Co-codamol in an attempt to improve the pain management. Assessment of pain is always difficult and communication between the patient and nurses is crucial to ensure adequate control. In an attempt to improve pain management it was recorded on the care plan that your husband's joints were painful and he was given muscle relaxant drugs which would also assist in his pain management.

It is clear there was a breakdown in communication between the nursing staff and yourself. I apologise for this. Medical cover is provided by general practitioners. They are available each day and can be contacted by telephone for advice and will visit as and when required.

Events of 9th April 2000

It is clearly documented that Mr Ripley's condition deteriorated on Sunday 9th April and Dr Williams saw him at 3.00pm. Dr Williams felt at this time that your husband had suffered a stroke.

You are correct that the Royal Hospital Haslar initially suggested that an overdose of MST may have caused the problem and he may have become dehydrated. Mr Ripley did need encouragement to drink at times. An overdose of MST was clearly ruled out because the last dose of MST had been given on 5th April at 8.10am, four days prior to his deterioration. Mr Ripley was given a total dose of 20 mgms of MST, the last dose given was on the 5 April 2000 at 8.10 am.

I am sorry you were unhappy for Mr Ripley to be transferred back to Gosport War Memorial Hospital because of your concerns about the standard of care and medication your husband received on Sultan Ward. This clearly must have been a very difficult time for you and I am sorry for the distress caused.

The events that happened two years ago clearly remain a concern for you and your husband.

I hope this letter helps reassure you in relation to the giving of morphine to your husband as it is felt not to have contributed to Mr Ripley's clinical deterioration.

I am sorry you feel there has been a lack of follow-up since receiving the CHI report in June. The action plan related to the recommendations will be available within the next few weeks on the Commission for Health Improvement web site.

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Yours sincerely
Alan Pickering
Acting Chief Executive

Fareham and Gosport 

Primary Care Trust

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ann.turner@portsha.swest.nhs.uk12th October, 2002Mrs P Ripley
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Dear Mrs Ripley

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of a copy of Deputy Chief Constable Readhead's letter enclosing your letter to him dated 31st September. I note that you made a complaint to Portsmouth HealthCare NHS Trust and will write to you again as soon as I have all the information to hand.

Yours sincerely

Ann Turner
Complaints Manager