

14/5/09

**HEALTH:** Panel will cost thousands

# Inquests doctor is set to face hearing

by **Clare Semke**  
Health reporter

THE GP at the centre of the Gosport War Memorial Hospital inquests is to appear before the General Medical Council.

A five-strong panel will examine the case of Dr Jane Barton, costing taxpayers at least £100,000.

The panel has powers to issue a warning, remove Dr Barton from the medical register or suspend or place conditions on her registration.

Katie Harvey, spokeswoman for the GMC, said it has had to wait for police investigations and inquests to be heard before it could hold the hearing.

She said: 'GMC investigations have to take account of other investigations such as criminal ones which take precedence.'



**Dr Jane Barton**

The hearing comes after 22 days of inquests into the deaths of 10 elderly patients at the Bury Road hospital.

In three cases the jury said high doses of strong painkillers given by family GP Dr Barton – a partner at the Forton Medical Centre in Whites Place, Gosport – were inappropriate. But the jury concluded that all 10 deaths were from natural causes.

Dr Barton was in day-

to-day charge of the now defunct Daedalus and Dryad wards at Gosport War Memorial where the patients died between 1996 and 1999.

She is now subject to seven conditions placed on her by the GMC including a temporary ban on prescribing painkiller diamorphine.

Dr Barton must also restrict her prescribing of tranquiliser diazepam in-line with medical guidance.

The exact cost of the 53-day hearing has not yet been revealed. But lay members are to be paid £300 a day, and a legal advisor will be paid £500 daily. Doctors serving on the panel will be able to charge locum expenses to the GMC.

Dr Barton declined to comment when approached by *The News*.

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## FACT FILE

■ Dr Jane Barton was the only doctor investigated in relation to the death of 10 elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

■ A damning report published by the then Commission for Health Improvement in 2002 found patients

were being put at risk.

■ The deaths were subject to three inquiries by Hampshire Police and a probe by the Crown Prosecution Service – which decided in November 2006 that no charges would be brought.