




News in brief

Fury as GP escapes being struck off

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Families of patients after GP Jane Barton avoided being struck off by the GMC

A doctor who prescribed "potentially hazardous" levels of drugs to elderly patients who later died has escaped being struck off.

Dr Jane Barton will be allowed to continue working as a doctor despite being found guilty of serious professional misconduct, a fitness to practise panel at the General Medical Council decided.

Relatives of the patients reacted furiously and walked out of the hearing in central London. Iain Wilson, the son of Robert Wilson,

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shouted: "You should hang your head in shame."

The panel found Dr Barton guilty of multiple incidents of serious professional misconduct.

The findings relate to her treatment of 12 patients at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in Hampshire between January 1996 and November 1999.

Panel chairman Andrew Reid said her failures included "the issuing of prescription drugs at levels which were excessive to patients' needs and which were inappropriate, potentially hazardous and not in the patients interests" and "the issuing of prescription drugs with dose ranges that were too wide and created a situation whereby drugs could be administered which were excessive to the patients' needs".

He listed a catalogue of failures, including making inadequate



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note-keeping.

And he said: "Further, Dr Barton failed to recognise the limits of her professional competence." Dr Barton insisted that in the circumstances her actions had been correct.

Despite the serious professional misconduct, the panel took into account that Dr Barton has continued to work safely as a GP for 10 years.

Instead of striking her from the register, it decided to apply 11 conditions relating to her practice. The conditions include not administering opiates by injection.

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