

Code A

46924925

From: Code A
 Sent: 09 February 2010 10:15
 To: Press Cuttings
 Subject: Press Cuttings - 9 Feb 10

4222

Press Cuttings Summary

Tuesday 9 February 2010

Direct Mentions

Print & Online Mentions

The Healthcare Republic website includes a positive review of the GMC's affiliates pilot schemes saying that they have been 'judged successful' by accountants KPMG. The article says that KPMG evaluated one-year schemes in north and central London and west Yorkshire and says that affiliates 'greatly improved' the relationship between the GMC and medical directors and improved their 'knowledge of fitness-to-practise thresholds'.

<http://www.healthcarerepublic.com/news/981948/GMC-affiliates-improve-handling-complaints-against-GPs/>

Pulse magazine (online) features an article on revalidation and reports that some senior GPs are starting to question whether it will actually happen. The article notes that 'some of the key elements required for revalidation to work are not in place' and comments that 'the fears about revalidation being a bureaucratic nightmare could just be coming true.'

<http://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=20&storycode=4124966&c=2>

The *Daily Mail* reports on the case of a Karen Saunders who has been granted compensation after being treated by a French surgeon, Dr Marc de la Caffiniere who was working in the UK. According to the article, Dr Caffiniere continues to practise in France and has faced no disciplinary action from the GMC. The article says that the case 'echoes' that of the locum Code A

There is further coverage in the *Evening Standard* about Dr Krzysztof Robak who was paid more than £100,000 in lost earnings after being suspended from Kingston Primary Care Trust following the death of a patient. The article says that he is suspended by the GMC and the doctor is quoted saying that a GMC investigation ruled that the patient's death was from 'natural causes'.

An article on *Moneywise* (online) reports on people who travel abroad for medical treatment. The article notes how people can increase their chances of receiving quality treatment by checking out the qualifications of the surgeon, such as checking they are registered with the GMC. Linda Briggs, Managing Director of Independent Advisors says "Plenty of foreign surgeons do register with the GMC and it shows they are serious about treating overseas patients. If they have qualifications from central Europe then they can get GMC registration."

<http://www.moneywise.co.uk/everyday-money/article/2010/02/08/guide-to-getting-treatment-abroad>

The *Wigan Evening Post* reports on the anti-vaccine campaign by pressure group JABS led by local parent Jackie Fletcher. The article says that the research of Code A has been a key part of the campaign and mentions the doctor's GMC hearing. In the *Times*, The Pedant column also mentions Dr Wakefield's case and the MMR-Autism debate as does the *Cambridge News* and *Chemist and Druggist* magazine.

Hospital Doctor

A blog on the Hospital Doctor website discusses the fitness to practise hearing of Dr Jane Barton and Code A Code A and the recent press coverage around the inquest involving Code A. The blog comments on the possible reasons why Dr Jane Barton did not receive such high profile media attention as the former two cases. It also comments on why she has been allowed to continue practising with conditions. The piece also notes the transfer of the GMC's adjudication function to OHPA next year.

<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/dr-blogs/why-is-one-health-story-bigger-than-another>

Hospital Doctor also features a story that looks at **Code A** review into the regulation of medical education and training. The article summarises a number of the recommendations made in the report.
<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/features/review-into-the-regulation-of-education-and-training>

GP (5 Feb 2010)

- The magazine reports that the GMC affiliates pilots have proved to significantly improve the 'efficiency and effectiveness' of complaints handling. The magazine also notes that the GMC and DH are examining more cost effective models.
- The recent findings of fact for the **Code A** set al hearing are covered.
- A comment piece questions why doctors are subject to increasing amounts of checks and regulation, noting the Independent Safeguarding Authority and asks why a GMC hearing is not enough for doctors.
- The medico-legal article looks at how doctors should deal with non-registered patients who may have a doctor elsewhere, quoting from the GMC's *Good Medical Practice* and *Confidentiality* guidance booklets.
- Although it does not directly mention the GMC, the magazine reports on Health Minister Mike O'Brien's comment following the inquest into **Code A** death that all PCTs must carry out their legal obligation to language test the GPs they put on their performers list.

Fitness to Practise Mentions

There are mentions of the following hearings:

Dr Purushottam Padala (*Birmingham Mail and Black Country Mail*).

Code A (*Hull Daily Mail*)

Dr Louay Al-Alousi (*Leicester Mercury*)

Dr Barbara Czaslawska (*Manchester Evening News*)

Dr Stuart Scott (*Press and Journal*)

Broadcast Mentions

BBC Radio 4's 'You and Yours' programme reported yesterday on the fitness to practise hearing of Dr Robert Trossel.

Letters pages

Two letters from *Times* readers focus on out-of-hours care. One, from a doctor, points out that if a five-doctor practice took back out-of-hour responsibility it would be the equivalent of losing one doctor for the whole of each week.

Letters published in the *Telegraph* look at the issue of testing the English-language skills of doctors from the EU. One of the letters says that air-traffic controllers have to take english exams, even when it is their native language. The other letter says that the rush to 'favour EU-trained doctors is a step too far'.

Other News

In his Medical Life column in *The Independent*, Jeremy Laurance comments on the Shadow Health Secretary's solutions to problems with out-of-hours care. He concludes that there were problems with the previous system and that harking back to making GPs 'collectively responsible' for providing out-of-hours care is not the answer.

The Herald reports on the inquiry into the death of Victoria Pickup. The parents of Ms Pickup have made a complaint against the Gardenhill Primary Care Centre at Castle Douglas (NHS Dumfries and Galloway) after their daughter died from pneumonia – two doctors who attended her did not listen to her chest.

The Evening Standard reports the case of a Dr Tarif Rehman who was arrested on Friday in Calcutta. The Indian-born medic is alleged to have assaulted his lawyer wife.

On 7 February the *Scotland on Sunday* covered a story about an increase in the number of queries that the MDDUS is receiving from doctors about how to deal with 'difficult' patients who complain unreasonably:

<http://news.scotsman.com/scotland/Growing-number-of--GPs.6050095.jp>

The Herald of 8 February mentions that the Scottish Government is considering introducing CARE (Consultation and Relational Empathy) questionnaires which ask patients for feedback following consultations. The collated results

would be made public. A GP is reported as saying that 'being 'held to account' by patients had a significant impact on how the practice is run': <http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/health/drive-to-give-patients-say-in-quality-of-care-1.1004570>

The Aberdeen *Press & Journal* reported that a senior surgeon at NHS Orkney, Code A has criticised the board for cuts which have led to some cases of 'sub-optimal' care (attached).



TNS 100208 PJ
NHS Orkney.pdf

Headlines:

GMC

Birmingham Mail

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 342

DOCTOR TOOK A SICKIE TO WORK AS NHS LOCUM

A senior doctor who cheated thousands of pounds out of the NHS by going off sick while working at another hospital has been banned for life by the General Medical Council.

GMC

Birmingham Mail

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 341

DOCTOR TOOK A SICKIE TO WORK AS NHS LOCUM

A senior doctor who cheated thousands of pounds out of the NHS by going off sick while working at another hospital has been banned for life by the General Medical Council.

GMC

Cambridge News

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 134

THE journal which published a

The journal which published a controversial research paper sparking concerns over a possible link between the MMR vaccine and autism retracted it from the public record.

GMC

Chemist & Druggist

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 40

MMR-autism link

The Lancet has withdrawn the 1998 paper that sparked fears over a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

GMC

Daily Mail

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 486

Surgeons frown in by NHS left me crippled

A woman has told reporters how non-British surgeons employed by the NHS crippled her following a botched foot operation. Karen Saunders has been awarded £282,500 damages by the NHS after the surgeon, whose grasp of English was poor, operated on the wrong toe, leaving her with a permanent limp. Dr Marc de la Caffiniere continues to practise in France and has faced no disciplinary action from the General Medical Council.

Doctors

Daily Telegraph

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 148

English-language skills of doctors from the EU

Readers' letters about language tests for foreign doctors in Britain.**Doctors**

Evening Standard

Delivery date : 08/02/2010

Number of words : 408

Indian doctor 'tortured British wife over dowry'

A doctor was due to appear in an Indian court today charged with attacking his British wife after her family refused to give in to his dowry demands. Tarif Rehman, 32 was arrested on Friday in a dawn raid in Calcutta, hours before he was due to fly back to London.

GMC

Evening Standard

Delivery date : 08/02/2010

Number of words : 359

I failed patient who died, says locum paid £100,000

A locum doctor, who was paid more than £100,000 in lost earnings after being suspended following the death of a patient, today admitted failing in his duty of care. The payments were stopped last March when Krzysztof Robak, of East Molesey, Surrey, was removed from the trust's books. He has now been suspended by the General Medical Council, despite an investigation finding his inadequate care had not contributed to Mrs Lilian Farren's death, which it concluded was from natural causes. The 62-year-old doctor recommended Lilian Farren, 86, eat a Mars bar and have an energy drink, believing she had low blood sugar.

Doctors

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 226

PCTs must use GP language test

The PCT which put German locum: Code A on its performers list was not carrying out adequate English tests, but is now, health minister Mike O'Brien has told MPs.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 241

GMC affiliates Improve handling of complaints'

Controversial plans to introduce GMC affiliates have had a boost after two pilot schemes were judged to be successful.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 794

Dealing with non-registered patients

MDU medico-legal adviser Dr Sally Old explains what to consider when treating temporary patients, noting the General Medical Council.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 162

GMC finds against MMR doctor Andrew Wakefield

The General Medical Council has found the facts against Code A the doctor at the centre of the MMR controversy, proven on almost every count.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 353

Red tape and regulations are rotting the NHS

Last week, I wrote about Parkinson's third law: 'Growth leads to complexity, complexity to decay', and remarked on how relevant it is to the massively inefficient NHS. Notes the General Medical Council.

GMC

Hull Daily Mail

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 377

Expenses scam doctor accused of misconduct

A heart surgeon who fiddled his expenses at an East Yorkshire hospital is due to face a General Medical Council misconduct hearing.

GMC

Leicester Mercury

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 288

Parents 'satisfied' as pathologist is struck off

A Leicester couple have welcomed the General Medical Council's decision to strike off Home Office pathologist Dr Louay Al-Alous after a catalogue of errors in postmortem examinations.

GMC

Manchester Evening News

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 183

Suspended, doc who left organist unable to play

A surgeon whose operation on a church organist's finger left the patient unable to play again has been suspended by the General Medical Council for a year.

GMC

Pharmaceutical Journal

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 57

Wendy Harris to move on

Wendy Harris, deputy registrar of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society since June 2008, is to leave and take up a new role leading the establishment of the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator. Notes the General Medical Council.

Doctors

The Herald

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 612

Parents accuse GP over death

THE parents of a young woman who died from a rare form of pneumonia claim a doctor did not check their daughter's lungs with a stethoscope even though she was having breathing difficulties.

Doctors

The Independent

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 511

The golden age of GP care - that never actually happened

Editorial comment on why the golden age of GP care never actually existed.

GMC

The Press and Journal

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 377

North-east health director suspended

A NORTH-EAST health director was suspended last night after he knowingly kept money intended for an Aberdeen practice.

GMC

The Press and Journal

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 294

Health director suspended over cash

A NORTH-EAST health director has been suspended from his post after he knowingly kept money intended for an Aberdeen practice.

Doctors

The Times

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 288

Out-of-hours medics

Reader's letter on GP's out-of-hours service.

GMC

The Times

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 465

The pedant The refutenik MPs

Editorial comment on

GMC

Wigan Evening Post

Delivery date : 04/02/2010

Number of words : 392

MUD-SLINGING FUELLING THE MMR PARANOIA

Comment on the Code A case at the General Medical Council.

GMC

Birmingham Mail

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 342

DOCTOR TOOK A SICKIE TO WORK AS NHS LOCUM

A senior doctor who cheated thousands of pounds out of the NHS by going off sick while working at another hospital has been banned for life by the General Medical Council.

GMC

Birmingham Mail

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 341

DOCTOR TOOK A SICKIE TO WORK AS NHS LOCUM

A senior doctor who cheated thousands of pounds out of the NHS by going off sick while working at another hospital has been banned for life by the General Medical Council.

GMC

Cambridge News

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 134

THE journal which published a

The journal which published a controversial research paper sparking concerns over a possible link between the MMR vaccine and autism retracted it from the public record.

GMC

Chemist & Druggist

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 40

MMR-autism link

The Lancet has withdrawn the 1998 paper that sparked fears over a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

GMC

Daily Mail

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 486

Surgeons f lown in by NHS lef t me crippled

A woman has told reporters how non-British surgeons employed by the NHS crippled her following a botched foot operation. Karen Saunders has been awarded £282,500 damages by the NHS after the surgeon, whose grasp of English was poor, operated on the wrong toe, leaving her with a permanent limp. Dr Marc de la Caffiniere continues to practise in France and has faced no disciplinary action from the General Medical Council.

Doctors

Daily Telegraph

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 148

English-language skills of doctors from the EU

Readers' letters about language tests for foreign doctors in Britain.

Doctors

Evening Standard

Delivery date : 08/02/2010

Number of words : 408

Indian doctor 'tortured British wife over dowry'

A doctor was due to appear in an Indian court today charged with attacking his British wife after her family refused to give in to his dowry demands. Tarif Rehman, 32 was arrested on Friday in a dawn raid in Calcutta, hours before he was due to fly back to London.

GMC

Evening Standard

Delivery date : 08/02/2010

Number of words : 359

I failed patient who died, says locum paid £100,000

A locum doctor, who was paid more than £100,000 in lost earnings after being suspended following the death of a patient, today admitted failing in his duty of care. The payments were stopped last March when Krzysztof Robak, of East Molesey, Surrey, was removed from the trust's books. He has now been suspended by the General Medical Council, despite an investigation finding his inadequate care had not contributed to Mrs Lilian Farren's death, which it concluded was from natural causes. The 62-year-old doctor recommended Lilian Farren, 86, eat a Mars bar and have an energy drink, believing she had low blood sugar.

Doctors

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 226

PCTs must use GP language test

The PCT which put German locum [Code A] on its performers list was not carrying out adequate English tests, but is now, health minister Mike O'Brien has told MPs.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 241

GMC affiliates Improve handling of complaints'

Controversial plans to introduce GMC affiliates have had a boost after two pilot schemes were judged to be successful.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 794

Dealing with non-registered patients

MDU medico-legal adviser Dr Sally Old explains what to consider when treating temporary patients, noting the General Medical Council.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 162

GMC finds against MMR doctor Andrew Wakefield

The General Medical Council has found the facts against [Code A] the doctor at the centre of the MMR controversy, proven on almost every count.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 353

Red tape and regulations are rotting the NHS

Last week, I wrote about Parkinson's third law: 'Growth leads to complexity, complexity to decay', and remarked on how relevant it is to the massively inefficient NHS. Notes the General Medical Council.

GMC

Hull Daily Mail

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 377

Expenses scam doctor accused of misconduct

A heart surgeon who fiddled his expenses at an East Yorkshire hospital is due to face a General Medical Council misconduct hearing.

GMC

Leicester Mercury

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 288

Parents 'satisfied' as pathologist is struck off

A Leicester couple have welcomed the General Medical Council's decision to strike off Home Office pathologist Dr Louay Al-Alous after a catalogue of errors in postmortem examinations.

GMC

Manchester Evening News

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 183

Suspended, doc who left organist unable to play

A surgeon whose operation on a church organist's finger left the patient unable to play again has been suspended by the General Medical Council for a year.

GMC

Pharmaceutical Journal

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 57

Wendy Harris to move on

Wendy Harris, deputy registrar of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society since June 2008, is to leave and take up a new role leading the establishment of the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator. Notes the General Medical Council.

Doctors

The Herald

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 612

Parents accuse GP over death

THE parents of a young woman who died from a rare form of pneumonia claim a doctor did not check their daughter's lungs with a stethoscope even though she was having breathing difficulties.

Doctors

The Independent

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 511

The golden age of GP care - that never actually happened

Editorial comment on why the golden age of GP care never actually existed.

GMC

The Press and Journal

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 377

North-east health director suspended

A NORTH-EAST health director was suspended last night after he knowingly kept money intended for an Aberdeen practice.

GMC

The Press and Journal

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 294

Health director suspended over cash

A NORTH-EAST health director has been suspended from his post after he knowingly kept money intended for an Aberdeen practice.

Doctors

The Times

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 288

Out-of-hours medics

Reader's letter on GP's out-of-hours service.

GMC

The Times

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 465

The pedant The refutenik MPs

Editorial comment on

GMC

Wigan Evening Post

Delivery date : 04/02/2010

Number of words : 392

MUD-SLINGING FUELLING THE MMR PARANOIA

Comment on the Code A case at the General Medical Council.

GMC

Birmingham Mail

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 342

DOCTOR TOOK A SICKIE TO WORK AS NHS LOCUM

A senior doctor who cheated thousands of pounds out of the NHS by going off sick while working at another hospital has been banned for life by the General Medical Council.

GMC

Birmingham Mail

Delivery date: 06/02/2010

Number of words : 341

DOCTOR TOOK A SICKIE TO WORK AS NHS LOCUM

A senior doctor who cheated thousands of pounds out of the NHS by going off sick while working at another hospital has been banned for life by the General Medical Council.

GMC

Cambridge News

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 134

THE journal which published a

The journal which published a controversial research paper sparking concerns over a possible link between the MMR vaccine and autism retracted it from the public record.

GMC

Chemist & Druggist

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 40

MMR-autism link

The Lancet has withdrawn the 1998 paper that sparked fears over a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

GMC

Daily Mail

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 486

Surgeons f lown in by NHS lef t me crippled

A woman has told reporters how non-British surgeons employed by the NHS crippled her following a botched foot operation. Karen Saunders has been awarded £282,500 damages by the NHS after the surgeon, whose grasp of English was poor, operated on the wrong toe, leaving her

with a permanent limp. Dr Marc de la Caffiniere continues to practise in France and has faced no disciplinary action from the General Medical Council.

Doctors

Daily Telegraph

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 148

English-language skills of doctors from the EU

Readers' letters about language tests for foreign doctors in Britain.

Doctors

Evening Standard

Delivery date : 08/02/2010

Number of words : 408

Indian doctor 'tortured British wife over dowry'

A doctor was due to appear in an Indian court today charged with attacking his British wife after her family refused to give in to his dowry demands. Tarif Rehman, 32 was arrested on Friday in a dawn raid in Calcutta, hours before he was due to fly back to London.

GMC

Evening Standard

Delivery date : 08/02/2010

Number of words : 359

I failed patient who died, says locum paid £100,000

A locum doctor, who was paid more than £100,000 in lost earnings after being suspended following the death of a patient, today admitted failing in his duty of care. The payments were stopped last March when Krzysztof Robak, of East Molesey, Surrey, was removed from the trust's books. He has now been suspended by the General Medical Council, despite an investigation finding his inadequate care had not contributed to Mrs Lilian Farren's death, which it concluded was from natural causes. The 62-year-old doctor recommended Lilian Farren, 86, eat a Mars bar and have an energy drink, believing she had low blood sugar.

Doctors

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 226

PCTs must use GP language test

The PCT which put German locum on its performers list was not carrying out adequate English tests, but is now, health minister Mike O'Brien has told MPs.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 241

GMC affiliates Improve handling of complaints'

Controversial plans to introduce GMC affiliates have had a boost after two pilot schemes were judged to be successful.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 794

Dealing with non-registered patients

MDU medico-legal adviser Dr Sally Old explains what to consider when treating temporary patients, noting the General Medical Council.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 162

GMC finds against MMR doctor Andrew Wakefield

The General Medical Council has found the facts against the doctor at the centre of the MMR controversy, proven on almost every count.

GMC

GP Magazine

Delivery date : 05/02/2010

Number of words : 353

Red tape and regulations are rotting the NHS

Last week, I wrote about Parkinson's third law: 'Growth leads to complexity, complexity to decay', and remarked on how relevant it is to the massively inefficient NHS. Notes the General Medical Council.

GMC

Hull Daily Mail

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 377

Expenses scam doctor accused of misconduct

A heart surgeon who fiddled his expenses at an East Yorkshire hospital is due to face a General Medical Council misconduct hearing.

GMC

Leicester Mercury

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 288

Parents 'satisfied' as pathologist is struck off

A Leicester couple have welcomed the General Medical Council's decision to strike off Home Office pathologist Dr Louay Al-Alous after a catalogue of errors in postmortem examinations.

GMC

Manchester Evening News

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 183

Suspended, doc who left organist unable to play

A surgeon whose operation on a church organist's finger left the patient unable to play again has been suspended by the General Medical Council for a year.

GMC

Pharmaceutical Journal

Delivery date : 06/02/2010

Number of words : 57

Wendy Harris to move on

Wendy Harris, deputy registrar of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society since June 2008, is to leave and take up a new role leading the establishment of the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator. Notes the General Medical Council.

Doctors

The Herald

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 612

Parents accuse GP over death

THE parents of a young woman who died from a rare form of pneumonia claim a doctor did not check their daughter's lungs with a stethoscope even though she was having breathing difficulties.

Doctors

The Independent

Delivery date : 09/02/2010

Number of words : 511

The golden age of GP care - that never actually happened

Editorial comment on why the golden age of GP care never actually existed.

Web links:**National Newspapers:**[The Times](#)[The Independent](#)**Other Regular Newspapers:**[The Scotsman](#)[The Herald](#)**Medical Press:**[Pulse](#)[BMJ](#)

The Guardian
The Daily Telegraph
The Daily Mail
The Daily Mirror
The Daily Express
The Sun
The Financial Times
Online Media:
The BBC
Channel 4
Sky

The Press & Journal HSJ
The Manchester Evening News The Lancet
Irish News
Belfast Telegraph
News Letter
South Wales Echo
South Wales Evening Post
Western Mail

The Press Cuttings Website



(/)

(<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/hdrads/out.php?ad=120>)

- [Home \(/\)](#)
- [News \(/blogs/category/our-news\)](#)

Web News

([/blogs/category/web-news](#))

- [Blogs \(/blogs/\)](#)
- [Guidance \(/blogs/guidance/\)](#)
- [Features \(/blogs/features/\)](#)
- [Clinical \(/blogs/clinical/\)](#)

They can help. Get a free initial financial consultation

ACT NOW

Chase & Vere

BMA

- [Humour \(/blogs/category/messy-business\)](#)

Search...

Go

[Dr Blogs \(http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/dr-blogs\)](http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/dr-blogs)

Hold the front page Katie's got married again

By Mike Broad - February 8th, 2010

Why do some medical stories get covered in the media and others don't?

It's a pertinent question this week as debate rages in the blogosphere about [Dr Jane Barton \(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/hampshire/8486936.stm\)](#). For the uninitiated, she's a GP in Gosport who has just been found guilty of serious professional misconduct by the GMC. Dr Barton prescribed "potentially hazardous" levels of sedatives and painkillers to patients at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in the 1990s. But, despite being found guilty of putting her patients at risk of premature death during that time, she has not been struck off. Instead she can continue to work under certain conditions, which includes a ban on injecting opiates for three years.

There's been widespread criticism of the decision. The GMC case followed an inquest last year into 10 deaths that concluded that prescribed drugs had been a factor in five. Furthermore, a number of commentators have questioned why Dr Barton didn't receive the same level of media attention as [Code A](#)

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/jan/28/andrew-wakefield-mmr-vaccine>) or [Code A](#)

<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/dr-blogs/our-gps-must-prevent-out-of-hours-killings>), the German GP at the centre of the out-of-hours storm.

It being the web, conspiracy theories abound. Barton 'survived' and received less coverage because she's white and from the right background. Others, like [Code A](#) haven't fared so well because of prejudice and racism. The media is only interested in exposing minorities or outsiders because that's what their small minded readerships want.

If you don't like that one, there's another. Barton 'got off' because she has friends and family in high places within the medical establishment. Conversations were held behind closed doors, strings were pulled. The media were scared off by the threat of libel.

Like most conspiracy theories, they're nonsense. There is a more prosaic explanation. Let's start with the GMC. The fitness to practise panel was clearly swayed by the outpouring of local support

11/27/2015

Hold the front page Katie's got married again - Hospital Dr

for Dr Barton. Supportive comments from current patients have even appeared on comment boards beneath the case's coverage in the nationals. Despite her serious failings at the Memorial Hospital in the 90s, she's clearly a popular GP now.

The GMC's adjudication powers are being moved to the totally independent Office of the Health Professions **Adjudicator** (<http://ohpa.org.uk>) next year, effectively signalling the end of self-regulation. It will be interesting to see whether the OHPA would be similarly influenced – I doubt it.

Fitness to practise panels make their own decisions, and the GMC itself is clearly not happy about this one. New chief executive Niall Dickson suggested she should have been struck off and has instigated a review. Furthermore, the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (**CHRE** (<http://www.chre.org.uk/>)), a supra-regulator if you like, is also having a look. Many forget that doctors now face double jeopardy. The CHRE has the power to refer the case to the High Court if it considers the decision to be unduly lenient.

In short, this case isn't over yet. Norman Lamb, shadow health secretary for the Lib Dems, is calling for a public inquiry into the matter, though I doubt that will be required.

So, on to the next point, why haven't the media covered it? Or, to be more accurate (because it has been covered by most of the nationals), why hasn't it been on TV?

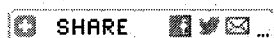
It's simple – it just hasn't sufficiently interested their journalists. While many health specialists might think it is an important story about competence, supervision and public protection, when you move into the mainstream media there is only so much 'space' for health stories. We've had a series of big health stories and if journalists, or more importantly their editors, decide that the Wakefield and Ubani cases have stronger news values (such as scope, relevance and topicality for their audiences) then every other health story gets squeezed. In the wider news agenda, the Iraq Inquiry has been squeezing everything.

Journalism is also a dying profession. Numbers have been slashed in recent years, which results in fewer specialists. Most reporters are now generalists, there's a lot of **churnalism** (http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2008/02/journalism_not_churnalism.html), and effective PR has more sway than ever. 'Good' stories get missed. Partly because of this the media acts like a pack, if one credible publication or outlet runs a story, the others dive in. It helps to manage their risk.

So, it really doesn't take a clandestine conspiracy for meaningful stories get pushed to the back of the queue, sadly just the England football **captain** (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/7125565/John-Terrys-wife-wants-divorce.html>) getting caught with his pants down or **Katie Price** (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1248096/Katie-Price-Alex-Reid-married-quickie-Las-Vegas-wedding-ceremony.html>) getting re-married will be enough.

• Posted in **Dr Blogs** (<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/dr-blogs>) • Tags: **GMC** (<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/tag/gmc>), **Media coverage** (<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/tag/media-coverage>)

(<http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php?v=250&username=hospitaldr>)



2 Responses to "Hold the front page Katie's got married again"

1. *andy* says:

February 11, 2010 at 8:59 pm (<http://www.hospitaldr.co.uk/blogs/dr-blogs/why-is-one-health-story-bigger->