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59805637

**From:** precise@precise.co.uk  
**Sent:** 13 July 2014 08:45  
**To:** Code A  
**Subject:** Daily Media Summary - Sunday 13 July 2014

# General Medical Council

## ALL COVERAGE

[All Articles](#)

## DIRECT MENTIONS / TOP STORIES

### **Almost 100 elderly patients 'put to sleep' by doctors who 'almost certainly' shortened their lives by routinely dosing them up with opiates**

*Mail Online UK (Web), 11/07/2014, p. 0, Darren Boyle*

An independent probe has been launched into the suspicious deaths of up to 100 elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. The inquiry follows a previous report that suggested some patients were given "life-shortening" painkillers even though they were not in any pain. Gillian Mackenzie, who believes her mum Gladys was unnecessarily prescribed high doses of morphine after a hip operation, despite showing no signs of pain, said: "I'm very happy that there is finally to be a full inquiry, but I will be unhappy if it is contained simply to the hospital as there are far wider ramifications involving the police and the General Medical Council."

[Article](#)

### **Change the law so that the terminally ill die with dignity**

*The Observer, 13/07/2014, p. 30, Unattributed*

[Article](#)

### **The rights and wrongs of assisted dying**

*The Sunday Times, 13/07/2014, p. 18, Unattributed*

[Article](#)

### **Church calls for inquiry into assisted dying**

*The Mail on Sunday, 13/07/2014, p. 14, Unattributed*

[Article](#)

### **Right-to-die would be signed off by two doctors**

*ITV.com (Web), 12/07/2014, p. 0, Unattributed*

[Article](#)

### **New doctors failing elderly patients**

*The Independent On Sunday, 13/07/2014, p. 4, Jamie Merrill*

[Article](#)

### **Now GPs who fail older patients will get 'red warning'**

*The Mail on Sunday, 13/07/2014, p. 12, Stephen Adams*

[Article](#)

## OTHER

### **Get therapy or have state benefits axed**

*The Sunday Telegraph, 13/07/2014, p. 1, Tim Ross*

[Article](#)

### **NHS tourists to pay extra**

*The Sun, 13/07/2014, p. 16, Craig Woodhouse*

[Article](#)

**Anger at 39-week abortion**

*The Sunday Express, 13/07/2014, p. 8, Caroline Wheeler*

[Article](#)

**Call is made on hospital checks**

*Express & Star (Wolverhampton), 10/07/2014, p. 12, Adam Burling*

[Article](#)

**Surgeon wins fight after NHS cover-up**

*The Sunday Times, 13/07/2014, p. 6, Martyn Halle*

[Article](#)

**'Perv' doc is cleared**

*The People, 13/07/2014, p. 35, Unattributed*

[Article](#)

**Royal Victoria Hospital A&E doctor quit over 'failures'**

*Belfast Telegraph (Web), 12/07/2014, p. 0, Unattributed*

[Article](#)

**Call for NHS consultants to encourage physical exercise as treatment**

*Glasgow Sunday Herald, 13/07/2014, p. 8, Judith Duffy*

[Article](#)

**Patients 'play doctor' with cutting edge surgery app**

*The Mail on Sunday, 13/07/2014, p. 40, Stephen Adams*

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The GMC is a charity registered in England and Wales (1089278) and Scotland (SC037750)

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2688646/Almost-100-elderly-patients-sleep-doctors-certainly-shortened-lives-routinely-dosing-opiates.html>

## Almost 100 elderly patients 'put to sleep' at one hospital by doctors who 'almost certainly' shortened their lives by routinely dosing them up with opiates

- Investigation will probe 92 deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital
- Former Bishop of Liverpool James Jones will lead the investigation
- The deaths occurred over a 12-year period between 1988 and 2000
- Hospital 'routinely' used opiates which 'almost certainly' shortened lives

By [DARREN BOYLE](#)

PUBLISHED: 10:49, 11 July 2014 | UPDATED: 14:39, 11 July 2014

A Hillsborough style investigation will probe the suspicious deaths of 92 pensioners at a hospital unit accused of 'routinely' administering morphine to elderly patients.

The two-year inquiry will focus on the Gosport War Memorial in Hampshire which had higher than expected death rates of elderly patients between 1988 and 2000.

Care Minister Norman Lamb announced the investigation yesterday appointing former Bishop of Liverpool James Jones to head the inquiry.

A police review into a number of the deaths did not provide enough evidence for prosecution, however and earlier review of clinical practice at the hospital criticised the routine use of opiates while treating elderly patients.

Minister Lamb said: 'Following the publication of the Baker Report in August 2013 into higher than expected death rates of elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital between 1988 and 2000, families have continued to raise concerns about the initial care of their relatives and the subsequent investigations into their deaths.

'In order to try and address their concerns, and having given consideration to a number of alternative options, I am setting up an independent panel to review the documentary evidence held across a range of organisations. I have asked Bishop James Jones to chair the panel. Having successfully steered the Hillsborough panel, he brings a wealth of expertise and experience to this work. He has begun to work with affected families, and will continue to do so over the coming weeks and months to ensure that the views of those most affected by these deaths are taken into account.'

Gillian MacKenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards, 91, died at the hospital in 1998 after a routine hip operation welcomed the probe.

She told The Mirror: 'I am very happy there is finally to be a full inquiry, but I will be unhappy if it is contained simply to the hospital as there are far wider ramifications involving the police and the General Medical Council. It's frustrating that there has never been a criminal prosecution. I want to know why not.'

The terms of reference of the investigation will be announced in the Autumn.

Prof James Baker's earlier review of the hospital's clinical practice found that the 'almost routine use of opiates' for elderly patients 'almost certainly had shortened the lives of some patients'.

Prof Baker said a number of those patients could have reasonably expected to make a full recovery.

The earlier probe found that the hospital routinely used morphine to make patients 'comfortable' as far back as 1988.

Commenting on his new role, Bishop Jones said: 'I am aware of the heavy responsibility of accepting the invitation to chair the Gosport Independent Panel.

'My first priority will be to consult with the families so that their views are taken into account when framing the terms of reference. My next task will be to assemble a panel and secretariat with the appropriate skills. I have already met with some of the families and will ensure that the panel has regular contact throughout its duration.

'I believe the experience of chairing the Hillsborough Independent Panel will help to equip me in chairing the Gosport Independent Panel.

'Independence and integrity will be the hallmarks of the panel's work.'

Gosport MP Caroline Dineage said: 'For the families involved, this has been a long and hard journey. I am pleased that the Government has expressed its commitment to addressing their ongoing concerns and finding out what really happened at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.'

'I have always called for openness and transparency - the families deserve nothing less. The inquiry, selected by the families as their preferred course of action, is an important first step in finally bringing closure to this difficult case.'

One of the hospital's clinicians Dr Jane Barton avoided being struck off following a General Medical Council investigation in 2010 into her treatment of patients at the hospital during the 1990s.

The investigation found Dr Barton guilty of serious professional misconduct and placed 11 restrictions on her registration.

Commenting after the hearing, Dr Barton said: 'I am disappointed by the decision of the GMC panel.'

'Anyone following this case carefully will know that I was faced with an excessive and increasing burden in trying to care for patients at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.'

'None of the nurses who gave evidence were critical of my care of the patients in this inquiry.'

'The consultants who had overall responsibility for the patients never expressed concern about my treatment and working practices.'

'Throughout my career I have tried to do my very best for all my patients and have had only their interests and wellbeing at heart.'