

FFW/31/04

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL

FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL (SERIOUS PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT)

Friday 26 June 2009

Code A

Chairman: Mr Andrew Reid, LLB JP

Panel Members: Ms Joy Julien
Mrs Pamela Mansell
Mr William Payne
Dr Roger Smith

Legal Assessor: Mr Francis Chamberlain

CASE OF:

BARTON, Jane Ann

(DAY FOURTEEN)

MR TOM KARK of counsel and MR BEN FITZGERALD of counsel, instructed by Field Fisher Waterhouse, Solicitors, appeared on behalf of the General Medical Council.

MR TIMOTHY LANGDALE QC and MR ALAN JENKINS of counsel, instructed by the Medical Defence Union, appeared on behalf of Dr Barton, who was present.

HEARING IN PRIVATE

(Transcript of the shorthand notes of **Code A** & Co Ltd.
Tel No: **Code A**)

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A

MR LANGDALE: Sir, before we start, may I just mention one matter? Not very long ago Dr Barton

B

Firstly, I know the Panel will not find any difficult if she needs to leave here today earlier than she otherwise would, perhaps at lunch time, I am not sure. Also, it has another consequence that it may be that she will be arriving late for the hearing on Monday or possibly not on Monday at all.

C

I appreciate it is not essential for the doctor in any hearing to be present but obviously so far as her legal advisers are concerned, we have to make sure that her defence is not in any way prejudiced or disadvantaged.

D

Mr Jenkins and I, and indeed Mr Barker, have satisfied ourselves that there is absolutely no difficulty about her being absent today because the witnesses are not witnesses from whom we would need specific instructions from Dr Barton, and similarly on Monday, those who it is envisaged we will be hearing from, no difficulty. If, however, we reach a stage which I think may occur on Tuesday where a witness appears before the Panel and we do need to have Dr Barton present to assist us, then there might be a difficulty but, as things stand, I do not think that difficulty is going to arise.

E

I simply mention that now so that the Panel know what the situation is and, as I say, the Panel can feel satisfied that the defence do not see any difficulty. Dr Barton is obviously anxious the case is not delayed in any way. I think that is probably the appropriate way to proceed. If matters change, I will of course inform you.

F

THE CHAIRMAN: It is very good of you to inform us. As you say, if bridges do have to be crossed, we will deal with them when we get to them.

THE LEGAL ASSESSOR: May I raise one matter? I am not sure whether the discussion which has just taken place as intended to be in private or indeed in public. It does of course relate to the doctor's health in a sense. I think that matter is something that should be clarified.

G

MR LANGDALE: I had mentioned this to your Secretary. The public should be excluded at this stage of the hearing. I understand your Legal Assessor's point. Obviously this particular hearing as been in camera.

H

THE CHAIRMAN: We need to make sure that the shorthand writer has noted it appropriately. Thank you, Legal Assessor.

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A MR KARK: Sir, may I mention something in relation to the witness attending this morning, Beverley Turnbull? She has literally just handed to us a signed version of her statement – we had previously had an unsigned draft – in which she has made some amendments. I am afraid we have only just been able to disclose that to Mr Langdale and Mr Jenkins. She did not want to send it back through the post apparently because she was frightened of it getting lost. That is why she has turned up with it here today.

B I do not think the amendments will take my learned friends very long to read. They will probably be grateful for them. What I would propose to do is carry on with the witness in chief and then if the defence need any time, then I am sure they will be given it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you happy with that, Mr Langdale or Mr Jenkins?

C MR JENKINS: He is and I am too. The amendments do not take me by surprise and it does not cause any difficulty at all.

BEVERLEY ANNE TURNBULL, Affirmed
Examined by MR KARK

(Introductions)

D MR KARK: I think it is Beverley Anne Turnbull, is that right?

A That is correct.

Q Is it Mrs Turnbull?

A Ms now.

E Q Ms Turnbull, I want to ask you now please about your training, your professional background, before you started working, as I think you did, at the Redcliff Annex and then you went on to Dryad Ward at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Before you got to the Redcliff Annex, when were you qualified as a nurse?

A I qualified in 1965 as a state-enrolled nurse – '65 to '67 was my training.

Q When eventually did you come to be employed at the Redcliff Annex, do you remember?

F A I think it was approximately 1976.

Q At that time, the Redcliff Annex was what sort of ward or hospital?

A It was a continuing care unit.

Q What did that really mean? What sort of patients were you dealing with?

G A Patients that were at end stage of life; they had chronic medical problems.

Q When you were at the Redcliff Annex, were you then a state-enrolled nurse?

A I was a state-enrolled nurse.

Q Did you later become a state-registered nurse?

A I did, yes.

H Q Did that require you passing further qualifications?

A A Yes, it did.

Q When you were at the Redcliff Annex, we have heard a little bit about that, we gather that although it was part of Gosport War Memorial Hospital, it was not in the same building; it was in an annex some miles away. Is that right?

A Yes.

B Q But still in the Portsmouth area?

A It came under Gosport War Memorial.

Q Did you focus I think your duties on night duties?

A At first when I was there I worked on day duty, just weekends.

Q Then later on?

C A In 1981, I cannot remember approximately the dates because it was a long time ago, I went on to night duty.

Q Did you remain on night duty for quite a while?

A I remained on night duty, yes.

Q Prior to coming to the Redcliff Annex, had you had any particular dealings with that sort of patient – long term, elderly patients?

D A No, only in my training.

Q Does it follow that some of the patients that you would have been dealing with were there for palliative care?

A Yes.

E Q What was your understanding of palliative care?

A Basically to keep the patient comfortable and to give them a fair quality of life until the end of their life.

Q But at that stage of the patient's care, is it recognised that the patient is at the end or coming towards the end of their life?

A Yes.

F Q Do not agree with me if I make a suggestion like that. You hesitated. You can put it in your own words.

A No, that is right.

Q Do you remember the time when Dr Barton came to the Redcliff Ward?

G A Yes, vaguely.

Q Up until the time that Dr Barton arrived, what had been the system in relation to doctors at the hospital?

A The patients would have their own general practitioner to care for them, to look after them.

H Q How often would you get a doctor on the ward, as it were?

A Because I did night duty, not very often.

- A
- Q Once Dr Barton arrived, did you remember there being any sort of change of practice?
A Not immediately, no.
- Q Subsequently?
A I think then subsequently the syringe driver was brought in.
- B
- Q Prior to Dr Barton arriving at the Redcliff Annex, had you been using syringe drivers?
A Not that I can remember.
- Q But your recollection is that once Dr Barton arrived, at some stage thereafter so did syringe drivers?
A That is correct.
- C
- Q We have heard, as you will appreciate, a lot of evidence already before you are sitting in that chair now, and we have heard a lot about the use of opiates and diamorphine and Oramorph, so we know a little bit about that. Again, can you remember what the level of the use of opiates was prior to Dr Barton arriving at the Redcliff Annex?
A Not really, no, I cannot remember.
- D
- Q When syringe drivers started being used, to your recollection, what sort of drugs were they being used for?
A Could you repeat that?
- Q Yes. Once syringe drivers arrived at the Redcliff Annex, can you remember what sort of drugs they generally tended to be used for?
A The syringe driver, generally diamorphine, midazolam and hyoscine.
- E
- Q I am not going to ask you for an explanation of those drugs because we have heard quite a lot about them already. Did there come a time when you transferred over; the Redcliff Annex closed and you moved over to Dryad Ward at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital?
A Correct.
- Q Can you remember exactly when that was?
A No.
- F
- Q Did you continue to work night duty at the Dryad?
A I did, yes.
- Q What would night duty at Dryad Ward mean? What was the period of time?
A We came on duty at a quarter past 8 in the evening until a quarter to 8 in the morning.
- G
- Q How many nurses, if you can generalise this, would be working night duty?
A Generally three on a ward.
- Q And Dryad Ward we have heard a bit about, would normally have how many patients, approximately?
A 20
- H
- Q Would it be full with 20?

- A A Not all the time but it was a 20-bedded unit.
- Q They type of patients that you had on Dryad Ward when you started were what?
A Again patients with quite severe medial problems, some orthopaedic patients ---
- Q Orthopaedic patients means patients due to have operations at the Royal Haslar or Queen Alexandra?
B A Yes.
- Q And they were coming to you for what?
A Supposedly – I say supposedly – rehab.
- Q Why do you say that?
A Because we did not really have the facilities.
- C Q What other sort of patients did you have?
A Patients with dementia, Parkinson's, patients that had had a CVA, numerous CVAs.
- Q Cerebral vascular accidents?
A Yes, cerebral vascular accidents and generally patients with medical problems.
- D Q Somewhere in one of our bundles we have a plan and I am going to ask for your assistance, please. I think you have a plan just to your right, have you?
A I have, yes.
- Q It has been put in I think at tab 11. I am probably going to get this wrong, but if we ignore for the moment the words "Dryad and Daedalus" and turn it the other way up so that the plan is as it was meant to be when it was printed with the typewritten words "Gosport War Memorial Hospital" on the right-hand side. Do you see at the bottom right-hand side it says Fareham and Gosport?
E A Yes.
- Q That is the way that we want it so that we are all looking at the plan in the same way. You and I have had a little introduction to this plan and I am very grateful to you for your assistance. On the left-hand side in the middle of that central block is that where we find the entrance?
F A Yes.
- Q We can see almost half way up the plan there is what is meant to be a door and then there is a long corridor in front of it. Can you hold your plan up and point to the entrance?
A The entrance is there.
- G Q In front of that we can see that there is a long corridor or passageway with a number of doors in it. Let's take it from the front door of the hospital. If we were to go through that front door and then turn left into that long block heading up towards the top of the plan, is that the outpatients?
A Yes, that is right.
- H Q Is that whole block outpatients?
A It is outpatients and the one on the far right there would be the health centre.

A

Q If we came in through the main door of the hospital and turned right that is going down towards the health centre, is it?

A Yes. It was then a separate building.

Q A separate area?

A Yes.

B

Q If we come back to our entrance and we walk straight down the corridor we can see that we get to a point where the corridor bears right or you can turn left through a pair of double doors.

A That is right.

Q Does that take us towards Dryad?

A That is correct, it does.

C

Q We can see that if we go through those double doors and then another two sets of double doors we get to a dark shaded area. Is all of that dark shaded area Dryad Ward?

A It is.

Q Let's come back to the double doors just as we head towards Dryad and we have just come off the main corridor. As we go through those doors there is another large set of rooms on the left just before we get to Dryad Ward. Can you tell us what that is?

A That would be the kitchen and the nurses' restroom.

D

Q It looks rather large but did that kitchen serve the whole of the hospital?

A It did, yes.

Q Opposite the kitchen on the right-hand side, going back to our corridor going down towards Dryad, is that a canteen?

A That is the canteen.

E

Q Then we have a sort of big open area right in the centre of that block. What was that?

A That is a quadrangle, gardens from Dryad, and also an area that you could get from the canteen into the quadrangle.

F

Q Was that a garden as with flowers and grass?

A Yes and a patio area so that patients and relatives could go into that area.

Q Then we find ourselves in Dryad Ward if we go straight down past the kitchens, past the canteen and we go into the ward. If we go straight ahead up towards the top of the plan, it is difficult to see because it is shaded in but is there a large room sticking out of it on the left top?

A Yes.

G

Q What is that room?

A That would have been a patients' sitting room.

H

Q Did that have chairs and a TV?

A It had chairs, TV and bookcases.

A

Q If we head on round presumably we have the various wards, the single rooms, of Dryad Ward.

A That is correct.

B

Q Let's come back to our long corridor. Instead of turning left towards Dryad Ward, let's take that route which is where the corridor bears right. If we were to follow that corridor down to those double doors at the end where do we find ourselves?

A That would be Daedalus Ward.

Q Is there a physio block to the left?

A Yes, there was a physio area.

C

Q If we go straight down that long corridor and through those double doors and keep to the right-hand side of the plan, is that where we find Daedalus?

A Can you repeat that?

Q Going straight down that corridor that bears off to the right and then through those double doors it looks as if you have got to do a right and a left.

A Yes, Daedalus would be sort of up this end and Dolphin Day Hospital would be down the other end.

D

Q Let's find the Dolphin Day Hospital. If we look to the right-hand side of that big block we can see that it is almost a mirror image of Daedalus on the other side and Dolphin Day Hospital is around that area, is it?

A Yes, it is.

E

Q In between the Dolphin Day Hospital and Dryad Ward there is one more area which is unshaded.

A That would be the Phoenix Day Hospital.

Q What sort of patients did the Phoenix Day Hospital look after?

A Phoenix Day Hospital looked after elderly mentally infirm patients.

F

Q Could you go from Dryad Ward into Phoenix Day Hospital?

A You could actually right at the far end of Dryad, yes, but obviously the doors were locked.

Q To stop people wandering too far.

A Yes.

G

Q Let's take you back again to Dryad Ward. You are working nights and you have now moved from the Redcliff Annex. Who were the other nurses who worked with you on night duty?

A Generally it could be another trained member or two support workers.

Q When you say another trained member, do you mean another trained nurse?

A A trained nurse, yes.

H

- A Q You have mentioned the use of syringe drivers. Did you yourself ever set up a syringe driver?
A Very rarely.
- Q Why would that be?
A At that time I was still an enrolled nurse and there would have to be another trained nurse with me or the syringe drivers would already be in situ.
- B Q Did you yourself ever have to recharge a syringe driver?
A Yes.
- Q Was that a common event?
A It would just be occasionally.
- C Q Did you yourself change medication in the syringe driver or was that a rarity?
A Only if a syringe driver needed to be recharged.
- Q When I say change medication I mean increase or decrease the amount.
A Again, very occasionally.
- D Q We have all heard about a lady called Sister Hamblin. Did you know Sister Hamblin?
A I did.
- Q How much contact did you have with Sister Hamblin?
A Sister Hamblin was the ward manager or the sister at that time and I would be in contact with her at the end of my shift or sometimes at the beginning of my shift.
- E Q Was that at the point of hand-over?
A That was at the point of hand-over.
- Q Tell us a little about hand-overs and what actually happened?
A Hand-over before you came on duty you would go into an office and whoever was in charge of the ward would give you a hand-over of the patients, their conditions and again that was done in the morning after a night shift and anything that obviously needed reporting would be handed over, any concerns about the patients.
- F Q Is that an exercise that you would sometimes perform with Sister Hamblin or would it normally be with other nurses?
A It could be with Sister Hamblin or it could be with the trained nurse in charge of the shift at that time.
- G Q In the early 1990s was there some disturbance among the staff in relation to the use of diamorphine and syringe drivers?
A Yes.
- Q It is a long time ago so I want to take you to some documentation. On your left you will see a file which has on its spine "Panel Bundle Documents 1". Please turn to tab 6. I am going to go through some of these documents with you and ask for your assistance as to what was happening on the ward at the time. We can see that the first document at page 2 is entitled "Summary of meeting held at Redclyffe Annexe on 11 July 1991".
- H

A A That is correct.

Q We can see:

“A meeting was arranged for the trained staff at Redclyffe Annexe following concern expressed by some staff at the prescribed treatment for terminal patients”.

B This, it is obvious, is that fairly shortly prior to the change to Dryad Ward?

A I cannot actually remember the dates.

Q Can we look at who was there. We can see that there was somebody called Mrs Evans. Was she a manager?

A She was at the time the matron of Gosport War Memorial.

C Q We can see that there was Sister Hamblin and Sister Goldsmith, Nurses Giffin, Ryder, Barrett, Williams, Donne, Tubritt, Barrington and yourself.

A That is correct.

Q I think all of the other nurses were state registered nurses.

A They were.

D Q For those of us who do not have any medical training, the difference between a state registered nurse and an enrolled nurse?

A Basically the enrolled nurse did two years' training and it was more on the practical sides of nursing and the state registered nurse was obviously trained in the theory as well as the practical and management sides.

Q Like it or not, is it a higher qualification?

E A It is.

Q Can we have a look at what the concerns were. This is when you were still at the Redclyffe Annexe.

“The main area for concern was the use of diamorphine on patients. All present appeared to accept its use for patients with severe pain but the majority had some reservations that it was always used appropriately at Redclyffe. The following concerns were expressed and discussed: not all patients given diamorphine have pain.”

F Looking at this document now, are these concerns that you recall being raised?

A Yes.

G Q Did you share those concerns yourself or not?

A I think I did because it was a long time ago. I think I did, yes.

Q The first concern was that not all patients given diamorphine had pain. What was your understanding of the appropriate uses of diamorphine?

A Then I think diamorphine probably would have been the last choice of drug given following the analgesic ladder and if that did not work then obviously you would go on to the narcotic drugs.

H

A Q The question I asked you was slightly different. What was your understanding of the appropriate uses of diamorphine? There is reference here to it being given for patients effectively without pain. Was it your understanding that diamorphine could appropriately be used upon patients who did not have pain? Could it be used for other things?

A It could have been used for other things.

B Q Appropriately?

A Yes.

Q Do you know what those other things were?

A If a patient is really distressed; if they cannot swallow.

C Q You just mentioned the analgesic ladder. Do you remember what the principles of the analgesic ladder were?

A Yes, to start on the lower dose of analgesia and then work up to the next level of analgesia if the first one was not working.

Q The first concern that was being raised was that not all patients given diamorphine had pain. The second concern was that:

D "No other forms of analgesia were considered and the 'sliding scale' of analgesia is never used,"

and that is something you just referred to.

A Yes.

E Q That is the analgesic ladder, is it?

A Yes.

Q "3. That the drug regime is used indiscriminately. Each patient's individual needs were not considered and that oral and rectal treatment is never considered.

4. That patients' deaths are sometimes hastened unnecessarily."

F I will pause there because I should break this up. Do you recall whether you shared these concerns?

A I did.

Q "5. The use of a syringe driver on commencing diamorphine prohibits trained staff from adjusting dose to suit patients' needs.

G 5. That too high a degree of unresponsiveness from the patients was sought at times."

What does that mean to you?

A That patients, when they went on the syringe driver, did become quite unresponsive.

H

A Q The concern apparently that was raised was that too high a degree of unresponsiveness from the patients was sought at times. How would you interpret that?
 A That they became ... That they were ... That they became quite un... That they were heavily sedated.

Q "7. That sedative drugs such as thioridazine would sometimes be more appropriate."

B So that would be an alternative, would it?

A In those days, yes.

Q "That diamorphine was prescribed prior to such procedures such as catheterisation where diazepam would be just as effective.

C That not all staff views were considered before a decision was made to start patients on diamorphine – it was suggested that weekly 'case conference' sessions could be held to decide on patients' complete care.

That other similar units did not move diamorphine as extensively."
 Again, were these concerns that you shared with others?

A It ...s... Yes.

D Q Were you going to say some?

A It was a long time ago. I think, yes – yes, it was.

Q We can see that there was no doctor present.

A That is correct.

E Q Could you help us, what had brought this meeting about?

A Going back to the top of the page, the person did bring these concerns, unfortunately she has died, Staff Nurse Giffin. She was the one that first brought this to the other staff's attention and initiated the meeting.

Q Was this sort of meeting a common occurrence or a rare occurrence?

A It is a long time ago. I think she aired her concerns and I think she mentioned it to some other staff and then they went to the matron and they wanted a meeting.

F Q Then if we go to the bottom of the paragraph:

"Mrs Evans acknowledged the staff's concern on this very emotive subject. She felt that the staff had only the patients' best interests at heart but pointed out that it was medical practice they were questioning that was not in her power to control. She felt that both Dr Logan and Dr Barton would consider staff views so long as they were based on proven facts rather than unqualified statements. Mrs Evans pointed out that she was not an expert in this field and was not therefore qualified to condemn nor condone their statements. She did, however, ask them to consider the following in answer to the statements made.

H

A That the patients suffered distress from other symptoms beside pain but also had the right to a peaceful and dignified death. That the majority of patients had complex problems.

If 'sliding scale' analgesia was appropriate in these circumstances, particularly when pain was not the primary cause for patient distress that terminal care should not be confused with care of cancer patients.

B The appropriateness of oral treatment at this time considering the patients' deterioration and possibility of maintaining ability to swallow. The range of drugs available to cover all patients' needs in drugs that can be given rectally together with patients' ability to retain and absorb the product.

C It was acknowledged that excessive doses or prolonged treatment may be detrimental to patients' health but was there any proven evidence to suggest that the small amounts prescribed at Redclyffe over a relatively short period did in fact harm the patients.

It could be suggested to Dr Barton that drugs could be given via a butterfly for the first 24 hours to give trained staff the opportunity to regularise dose to suit patient." I am going to pause there. What does that mean? Why is that different to a syringe driver? If you cannot tell us ...

D A I cannot; I do not know.

MR KARK: "That treatment sometimes needs regularising as patients' condition changed – were staff contributing signs of ..."

E MR JENKINS: I think it means "attributing".

MR KARK: I am grateful; you are right.

"Were staff attributing signs of patients' deterioration to effects of drug? Few patients remained aware until the moment of death."

F MR JENKINS: It is "awake".

MR KARK: I think it could be either.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Jenkins, may I ask if you are going to interject if you could put your microphone on to ensure that we are properly on the transcript.

G MR KARK: I am not going to read through all of this but we can all do that. We can see towards the bottom of the page the penultimate bullet point:

"Is it appropriate to give diamorphine for other distressing symptoms other than pain."

Then over the page we see:

H

A "To try and find the answers to these questions Mrs Evans would invite [Code A] to talk to staff on drugs and ask [Code A] from Charles Ward if he would be prepared to contribute to discussion.

This would take time to arrange. Meanwhile staff were asked to talk to Dr Barton if they had any reason for concern on treatment prescribed as she was willing to discuss any aspect of patient treatment with staff."

B And the writer hopes to have included everyone's view in the summary.

If we go two pages on, to page 6, this issue seems, as it were, to have bubbled on.

A That is correct, it did.

Q Do you remember that?

C A Vaguely, but yes.

Q There was another meeting at the end of October of 1991 and again you attended, but this one was a rather smaller meeting. This is a report by somebody called [Code A] [Code A] and the purpose of her visit apparently was in a response to a request by Staff Nurse [Code A] to discuss the issue of anomalies in the administration of drugs. So was this a meeting that took place with [Code A]?

D A It did, yes.

Q Then I think problems were set out. The first was that:

"Staff Nurse Giffin reported a female present who was capable of stating when she had pain was prescribed diamorphine via syringe driver when she was in no obvious pain and had not complained of pain."

E There was another patient who had been admitted from St. Mary's who was recovering from pneumonia:

"... was eating, drinking and communicating was prescribed 40 mgs of diamorphine via a syringe driver together with hyoscine over 24 hours. The patient had no obvious signs of pain but had increased bronchial secretions.

F Staff Nurse Tubbritt reported that on one occasion a syringe driver had run out ..."

And that it was not meant to.

"The staff are concerned that diamorphine is being prescribed indiscriminately without alternative analgesia, night sedation or tranquilisers being considered or prescribed."

G Again I am going to pause. Do you recall, first of all, these concerns bubbling on at the back end of 1991?

A I do.

Q Did you share those concerns?

H A I did, yes.

- A
- Q We see that there were three nurses actually present. May I ask you this: were you there in an individual role, as it were, or were you there representing others?
- A I think I was there representing ... In both, actually – yes, in both, I think. Individually and also representing ...
- B
- Q The concerns of others.
- A Yes.
- Q “Nurse Tubbritt reported that a female patient of 92 years awaiting discharge had intramuscular 10 mg diamorphine ...”
- On two occasions, I think, for a manual evacuation of faeces. And there were various other concerns raised by other nurses. If we go to half way through the next page, do you see underneath the word “note”, which is underlined:
- C
- “The staff cannot understand why the patient was prescribed Oramorph and diamorphine.
When the staff questioned the prescription with Sister ...”
- Would that be Sister Hamblin?
- D
- A It would, yes.
- Q “They were informed that the patient had pain. The staff recalled, having asked the patient on numerous if he had pain, his normal reply was no.”
- May I ask you this as a generality – and we will come back to it when we look at notes later on – you were a night nurse.
- E
- A Yes.
- Q If a patient complained of pain while you were on duty, is that something that you would make a note about or not necessarily?
- A I would make a note of that, definitely.
- F
- Q You seem very certain about that.
- A Yes, I would.
- Q Why? Why would it be important?
- A Because it would have needed to have been addressed by the medical team in the morning.
- G
- Q So that they would see your note.
- A Yes.
- Q And take appropriate action.
- A Yes.
- H
- Q “Conclusion. The staff are concerned that diamorphine is being used indiscriminately even though they reported their concerns to their manager on 11 July ...”

A

So that is many months earlier.

“The staff are concerned that non opioids or weak opioids are not being considered prior to the use of diamorphine.

B

The staff have had some training, arranged by the hospital manager, namely:

- the syringe driver and pain control;
- pain control.”

Do you remember that training? Did you have training in syringe drivers yourself?

A Again, it is a long time. I have the vague recollection. I think yes.

C

Q Then we can see that somebody got hold of a video – Nurse Tubritt – entitled *Making Pain Management More Effective*

I think you also produced the letter that we have at page 10 and this was written by somebody called [Code A] who is an RCN Officer. What does that mean? What is his role?

A He belongs to the Royal College of Nursing, which represents nurses, and he was at that time the representative.

D

Q Why had it got into his desk, as it were?

A Because we felt that we were not getting anywhere and we needed to go to the Royal College of Nursing.

Q Was that a common event or a rare event?

A That was a rare event.

E

Q I am not going to read all the way through this letter, but if we look at the second paragraph, this is a letter dated 22 November 1991 from [Code A] to Mrs Evans, the Patient Care Manager at GWMH:

“This office was aware of the concerns that had been expressed by staff earlier this year and other discussions that had taken place with yourself as the manager. It had been understood that the concerns raised would be addressed and the RCN had anticipated that clear guidance/policy would be promulgated as a result of the very serious professional concerns nursing staff were expressing.

It is now a matter of serious concern that these complaints were not acted upon in the way that had been anticipated.”

G

I am not going to read the rest of that but the last line of that paragraph:

“We now expect a clear policy to be agreed as a matter of urgency.”

The next page actually is a copy – a different recipient’s copy I expect – of the same thing. If we go to page 13 we are now in December of the same year. I will not take you through that letter specifically. If we go to page 14 we are still in December. This is now Mr [Code A] who

H

A is a Branch Convener writing to the District General Manager, Mr [Code A]. Again, do you remember this issue bubbling on into December?

A Yes, I do.

Q I am going to try to be limited with this letter. First of all he says that the problem has been brought to his attention in April 1991 but apparently has been present for the past two years. He says:

B "I was contacted by a staff nurse who is currently employed on night duty at the Redclyffe Annex. Her concern was that patients within Redclyffe were being prescribed diamorphine who she felt did not always require it, the outcome being that the patient died. The drug was always being administered by syringe drivers. It is fair to say that this member of staff was speaking on behalf of a group of her colleagues."

C Who was that member of staff?

A Can I continue to read it to refresh my memory, please?

Q Certainly. (A short pause) If you go to the paragraph after the next:

D "Following the aforesaid meeting two study days on 'pain control' were arranged. As you will see from the minutes relating to the meeting of 11 July 1991 ..."

Which we have looked at:

"... some of the concerns voiced by the staff were that diamorphine was being prescribed for patients who were not in pain and these study days did temporarily alleviate the worries of the staff.

E Regrettably the concerns of the staff have once again returned. One of the staff nurses, who is currently on an ENB course, was talking to Mr [Code A]"

Would that have been you or not?

A I cannot remember. I do not think it was me.

F Q Over the page there is a discussion about a grievance being lodged.

"I feel that the staff have acted professionally and with remarkable restraint considering that it is fair to say that since highlighting their concerns there has been a certain amount of ostracization."

Tell us about that.

G A Sorry, can I go back to your previous question. I said it could have been me because I did do an ENB course but I cannot quite remember.

Q It is a long time ago and I do not think that anybody is going to criticise you for not remembering something that was so many decades ago. But Mr [Code A] writes that the staff had acted professionally and there had been a certain amount of ostracization. Can I ask you about that? What happened?

H

A A From what I can remember there seemed to be on the unit where I worked tension, and that we were perhaps labelled trouble makers.

Q Tension between whom?

A Some other staff, mostly day staff, and that we were labelled trouble makers.

B Q Was the day staff and night staff?
A Generally day staff.

Q And you of course were night staff?

A Yes.

Q And the trouble makers were who?

A Us, we were the trouble makers.

C Q Next paragraph:

“I have various concerns for the patients and subsequently their relatives, the staff in that they are working in this environment but also that this could be leaked to the media. While none of the staff or myself have any desire whatsoever to use this means, there is serious concern from both myself and the staff that someone could actually leak this and I hope you know my feelings about the media and using it as a means of resolving problems. I hope you agree with me in that we have to address this issue urgently.”

D He is seeking his advice.

E “I must stress that none of the staff have shown any malice in what they have said and that their only concern is for the patient.”

Next we have a letter to Ms Tubbriff, which I am not going to ask you about. Could we go to page 17. In fact it is going backwards in time and I think it is really repeating the same matters. Can I ask you to help us with this? We have seen a lot of discussions about the issue and the hope that there would be a positive response and something would come out of all of this. Can you just help us with this? Was any protocol devised or any written policy that you can remember that came out of these meetings?

F A No.

Q Can we go towards the end of December, to page 23, please? This is another meeting that I think you attended. This time it is on 17 December 1991. The first page I think sets out the background. Over on page 24:

G “As Mrs Evans had presented staff’s concerns she stated the problem as she saw it and invited staff to comment if they did not agree with her interpretation.”

So this is the manager speaking?

A It is. Sorry, the matron.

H

A Q Let us just see who the matron was addressing. On the page before: Mrs Evans, Patient Care Manager, is her description, then we have Dr Logan and Dr Barton was there, Sister Hamblin, a number of nurses, including yourself.

A That is correct.

Q Did you yourself have any direct discussion with Dr Barton about this issue?

A I cannot remember.

B Q Mrs Evans said the following:

“We have an increasing number of patients requiring terminal care.

Everyone agrees that our main aim with these patients is to relieve their symptoms and allow them a peaceful and dignified death.

C The prescribing of diamorphine to patients with easily recognised severe pain has not been questioned.

What is questioned is the appropriateness of prescribing diamorphine for other symptoms or less obvious pain.”

D I asked you a bit about this earlier on. I am going to come back to it. What other symptoms was diamorphine being used for?

A If a patient is in distress, if they have excessive secretions.

Q We are talking about diamorphine?

A Sorry, yes, some breathing problems.

E Q Anything else that you can remember?

A I cannot think of anything else at the moment.

Q “5. No one was questioning the amounts of diamorphine or suggesting that doses were inappropriate.”

Was that right?

F A I think so. It is a long time ago. I cannot really remember.

Q “All present agreed with these statements, no other comments were asked to be considered.”

I know it is a very long time ago but can you remember any of the staff putting up a hand and saying, “Hang on”?

G A No, I do not. I cannot.

Q Can you remember anything about the tenor of these meetings, what this particular meeting was like with the doctors there and the manager?

A I have a vague recollection that I think we felt that we were not getting anywhere. Obviously we were not medically experienced enough or not medically trained.

H Q And so?

- A A Basically that we were banging our heads against a brick wall, from what I can remember.
- Q Then we can see in the bottom half of the page that Dr Logan then spoke to the staff at length on symptom control and covered a number of issues.
- B “The first priority was to establish cause of symptom and remove cause if possible.
- Where appropriate the ‘sliding scale’ of analgesics should be used.
- Oral medication should be used where possible....
- The aim of opiate usage was to produce comfort and tranquillity at the smallest necessary dose – an unreceptive patient is not the prime objective.
- C The limited range of suitable drugs available if normal range of analgesics not effective.
- That diamorphine had added benefits of producing a feeling of well being in the patient.
- D The difficulty of accurately assessing levels of discomfort with patients who were not able to express themselves fully or who had multiple medical problems....
- It was not acceptable for patients who are deteriorating terminally, and require 2 hourly turning, to have pain or distress during this process. They require analgesia even if they are content between these times.”
- E Then Dr Logan said he would be willing to speak to any member of staff who still had concerns. Then this:
- “...after speaking to Dr Barton or Sister Hamblin. Comments raised during discussion were:
- (a) All staff had a great respect for Dr Barton and did not question her professional judgement.”
- F Is that right?
- A That is correct.
- Q Are you still of that view?
- A Yes.
- G Q “The night staff present did not feel that their opinions of patient’s condition were considered before prescribing of diamorphine.
- A That was true as well.
- H Q “The patients were not always comfortable during the day even if they had slept during the night.”

A So I suppose it is a fair comment to make that you did not know what was happening during the day with these patients?

A That is correct as well.

Q Other than what you read in the notes?

A That is right, yes.

B Q "There appeared to be a lack of communication causing some of the problem.

Some staff feared that it was becoming routine to prescribe diamorphine to patients that were dying regardless of their symptoms."

Did you share that fear?

C A Yes, I did.

Q "All staff agreed that if they had concerns in future related to the prescribing of drugs they would approach Dr Barton or Sister Hamblin in the first instance for explanation..."

D Can you ever remember actually doing that when you had a concern, going up to Sister Hamblin and saying, "What is happening her?"

A No, I did not.

Q May I ask why not?

A Because we felt that she would not listen to us.

Q What about going to Dr Barton?

E A I cannot remember actually. I think I used to sometimes, going off duty, see Dr Barton and if I did have any concerns, yes, I think I did.

Q What would happen?

A Sometimes Dr Barton would come in just as we were going off and I would say, if I did have any concerns; yes, I would let her know what kind of night a patient did have.

F Q So you would be letting Dr Barton know how the patient had been at night?

A Yes, when I did see her because I did not always see her at the end of a shift.

Q Did you ever go to Dr Barton, which this is suggesting, and say, "Dr Barton, I do not think this patient should be on diamorphine?"

A No, I did not.

G Q Then this:

"Mrs Evans spoke to the remaining nursing staff.

Staff were asked if they felt there was nay need for a policy relating to nursing practice on this issue. No one present felt this was appropriate."

H So nobody said, "Yes, we would like a policy, please", is that right?

A A Yes, from what I can remember.

Q Speaking for yourself, and you can only speak for yourself?

A No, I do not think we did. No, there was not.

Q Why did you not? Was it because you did not want a policy or ---

B A We just felt --- I think morale was still very low and we were just banging our heads against a brick wall again.

Q Did anything come out of all of these meetings, so far as you were concerned?

A I cannot really remember, to be honest. I do not think a lot came out of it.

Q Prior to looking at that correspondence, you had gone over to Dryad Ward and you had started working on Dryad Ward?

C A Yes.

Q Did you ever raise similar concerns once you were there?

A No.

MR KARK: We are going to begin to look at patients on Dryad Ward. I wonder if that would be a convenient moment?

D THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, thank you, Mr Kark.

We are going to take the first break that I mentioned. Ms Turnbull, someone will take you to a place where you can get some refreshment. You are in the middle of giving your evidence and I anticipate you will be for some time, so this is a warning for now and for every break that you take. Please under no circumstances talk to anybody about the case. Is that clear?

E A Yes.

(The Panel adjourned for a short time)

MR KARK: Ms Turnbull, we were looking at all those notes of meetings that took place in '91. Then I was going to turn to your time on Dryad Ward. It is right to say that you made a statement to the police I think in 2002. You were asked, I think, if you had any concerns on Dryad Ward about the incorrect use of syringe drivers and you did not then have any concerns?

F A That is correct.

Q You said I think in a statement, "I believe that syringe drivers were correctly used for people who needed them". You said, "As I remember it, the issue seems to have been resolved".

G A That is right.

Q When you knew that you were going to be seen by the police, I think you took all of these papers that we have been looking at, the 1991 papers, to somebody called Toni Scammell?

A Yes, that is correct.

H Q Who is Toni Scammell?

- A A She was at that time the modern matron of the hospital, of the War Memorial.
- Q Can I just ask you why you did that?
- A Because the hospital was undergoing a CHI investigation.
- Q A CHI investigation, Commission for Health Improvement?
- A Yes. My colleague and I thought we had to hand these papers in to Toni Scammell.
- B Q Can you help us: how had the issue been resolved?
- A (Pause) Practice seemed to be OK. We did not have any concerns. We were quite happy with things.
- Q We are going to look at some individual patients and we will see how it actually worked. Once you moved to Dryad Ward, you continued on nights?
- C A That is correct.
- Q We have seen through the notes, and I think I can probably lead you on this, that it seems to be common with most of our patients certainly that the syringe drivers when they were set up were set up during the day?
- A Yes.
- D Q Can you remember setting up any syringe drivers yourself?
- A No, I cannot.
- Q If a decision was taken to put a patient on to a syringe driver, that would not be a decision made by you?
- A No.
- E Q You would come in on nights and you would find on occasion that a patient who had not been on a syringe driver the day before was now on a syringe driver.
- A That is correct.
- Q Once the patient was on a syringe driver – I do not know if you can deal with this by way of generality, you probably cannot – for how long did they tend to remain conscious or did they become unconscious?
- F A I cannot give a time.
- Q Can we turn to a patient called Ruby Lake and pick up file F, page 394. It is the page numbers with a line either side in manuscript. Does it start at the top with 18 August?
- A That is correct, yes.
- G Q We know that this patient had gone into the Royal Haslar on 5 August having had a fall at home and fractured a left neck of femur. She had come over to you on 18 August, the date you see at the top, and the very first note here is not your note, is it?
- A No.
- Q I am not going to ask you about other people's notes but we can simply see that she was admitted to you with "a fractured left neck of femur, leg ulcers, broken skin on sacrum, a pleasant lady happy to be here." Going to the bottom of that page do we see your writing?
- H A Yes.

- A
- Q This is a summary of significant events. We have not asked a previous witness about this but we have a multiplicity of nursing notes. We have all sorts of different forms of nursing note. Can you help us with what this document is used for?
- A This document is to write down any change in the patient's medical condition.
- B
- Q So far as this lady is concerned, Ruby Lake, do you have any independent recollection of her at all?
- A No, I do not.
- Q I am not going to ask you a huge amount. Can you help us with the notes at the bottom. You were writing on this piece of paper. How much of what had gone before would you have read?
- C
- A I would have read obviously what had happened during the day and I would have read obviously the documentation before me.
- Q When you say the documentation before you, do you mean on the same day or would you have read all of this page?
- A I probably would have read, yes, definitely all the page.
- D
- Q You would have seen that she had come in with a fracture of the neck of femur.
- A Yes.
- Q You would have seen that on the following day, 19 August, she had some chest pain but it was not radiating down the arm and she was given Oramorph.
- A Yes.
- E
- Q Then she was put on that day on a syringe driver, yes?
- A Yes.
- Q The day after her admission she is given diamorphine, as we can see, and midazolam. Then we can see 20 August her condition appears to have deteriorated overnight, driver recharged. Please help us right at the bottom with your note. It simply says "Night", I think?
- A Yes. That would be my documentation during the course of the night shift.
- F
- Q You would not put down a specific time.
- A Not necessarily.
- Q I think we may need to read the note prior to yours to understand your note.
- "Condition appears to have deteriorated overnight."
- G
- That is the night of the 19th into 20 August, is it?
- A 12:15 could have been lunchtime.
- Q "Condition appears to have deteriorated overnight" would have been the night of 19 August into 20 August.
- A Yes.
- H
- Q "Driver recharged at 10:10". We can see that it was continued:

A "Family informed of condition. Daughter present at time of report."

You have written on the night-time of 20 August?

A

B "General condition continued to deteriorate. Very bubbly. Suction attempted without success." Over the page, night continued: "Position changed frequently. Ruby rousable and distressed when moved. Syringe driver recharged. Diamorphine 60mg, midazolam 60mg and hyoscine 800mg and daughter has enquired at 0800 Ruby's condition."

I have signed that entry.

C Q Please go back to page 368e. We are going to try and get the original of this because even with its very good copy it is quite difficult to read. Can you see right at the top there is a prescription written out by Dr Barton for diamorphine between 20 and 200mg?

A Yes.

Q How would you read that prescription? What would that allow you to do?

A That would allow me to give diamorphine or to charge a syringe driver between 20 and 200mg, depending on the patient's condition.

D Q Would you, together with another nurse, be able to increase the dose if you felt it was necessary?

A Yes, we could.

Q Would you have a discussion with the nurse before you did so?

A Definitely.

E Q What I think we may want to know from you is what your understanding of any guideline or rule there was about the increase in a dose of diamorphine. What would you look at to know by how much to increase the dose?

A If a patient was distressed, if the amount that she was having at that time was not keeping her comfortable.

F Q I understand that. That would be the reason for increasing the dose, but what we perhaps need to know is what your understanding is of by how much you could increase the dose or should increase the dose. This lady the day before had been on 20mg.

A Can I just have a look again?

Q Do you want to look at the original?

A Yes, please. (Same handed)

G Q This lady seems to have gone up from 20 to this increase of 60mg which you have been present at. We might all need to understand your thinking.

A It would have been if that amount was not holding her and it would not have been my decision alone; it would have been the other trained nurse.

H Q I entirely understand that but you were part of the decision-making process, were you?

- A A I probably would have been, yes.
- Q Would you have gone back to the doctor to do this?
- A Not necessarily on night duty. I think it went from 20 to 40. (Short pause) Yes, it was 60.
- B Q Can you help us what your training, your state of knowledge was, about the way that you were meant to increase opiates? Let's forget what the increase actually was. What we want to know is what your training was about how you increase opiates. Can you remember having any training?
- A Not a lot, no.
- Q Did you have any discussion with anybody – Dr Barton or anybody else – about if this sort of situation arose how you should ---
- C A No. All I can remember is it would go on what a patient had the time before you actually recharged it and it would have to be two trained staff to make that decision.
- Q I understand all of that.
- A There were no guidelines exactly that I can remember.
- Q Would you go to the BNF or not necessarily?
- D A I cannot remember.
- Q To what degree did you have discretion about how much to increase drugs like this?
- A Only what the patient was presenting in terms of pain distress.
- Q You have a patient who is on 20mg. When they are turned they appear to you to be distressed. You have then got to make a decision that you might on that occasion increase the diamorphine. Are you able to help the Panel at all as to how you mind would work when you decided whether to put it up to 30 or 40 or 80 or 100?
- E A To be honest I cannot remember.
- Q Are you still in nursing now?
- A Yes.
- F Q Do you deal with diamorphine now?
- A Yes.
- Q Do you ever increase doses now?
- A No, the prescription is written entirely differently. There are perimeters with the diamorphine.
- G Q These ranges between 20 and 200mg of diamorphine – had you ever come across that sort of system before?
- A No.
- Q Have you ever come across it since?
- A No.

H

A Q In any event it seems that this patient was indeed put up to 60mg and you have made a note of that in the record. "Distressed when turned" – what does that signify? I know that is your bread and butter as a nurse.

A She could have been in pain. She resented being turned; it was causing her distress.

Q If we go back to your note at 395, keeping a finger where you are, it is easier to read. We have dealt with the diamorphine but the midazolam also went up I think, did it not?

B A Can I just go back on this one? The time was 07:35 in the morning. Sometimes whoever was in charge of the ward, the manager might have come on before that and the night staff might have approached her and asked her advice of what to give. That sometimes happened as well so that could have been a managerial decision as well.

Q If you want to look at the controlled drug book we have got that here but it shows that 07:35 60mg was withdrawn and administered to the patient and it is witnessed by I think Nurse Tubritt.

C A Yes.

Q Was Nurse Tubritt day or night staff?

A She was nights and she was senior to me.

Q I want you to understand that I am not trying to fix personal responsibility on you. I am just trying to see how things worked and what actually happened. Not only was the diamorphine increased to 60mg but the midazolam was increased to 60. What would be the effect of that upon the patient? What is the purpose of increasing the midazolam?

D A Midazolam sedates a patient, keeps them calm, calms them down like a sedative.

Q You would understand that, would you?

A Yes, definitely.

E Q You would have known that at the time.

A Yes.

Q Can you remember what your thinking would be, not about the fact that you are increasing midazolam apparently but the amount by which you are increasing it? Would there be any process you would go through to think about how much?

F A Yes. Was the previous one keeping the patient calm and not in distress?

Q This appears to be a triple dose, does it not?

A It does.

Q You have tripled. Looking back on that now does that surprise you?

G A To be honest, no. It surprises me the amount, yes, but ...

Q What does not surprise you?

A The amount. I suppose the increase in the amount.

Q That does not surprise you?

H A If she had been very distressed and 20mg was not holding her. Yes, it does surprise me now, yes.

- A Q Why?
A Because it is quite a big range to increase that drug.
- Q We can see that that syringe driver continues because although at page 394 it says "Night" and it appears to be on 20 August is actually the early hours of 21st, is it not?
A It is, yes.
- B Q That syringe driver at which you had been present at the recharge, would you have actually recharged it yourself?
A Not necessarily, no.
- Q But you have made a note of it, so presumably would you have been there?
A Yes. Two trained staff have to go and do it.
- C Q The hyoscine I think is also increased. It was previously on 400 and so that has been doubled, and the hyoscine would be for what?
A If a patient has secretions in their airways it reduces the amount of secretions, dries up secretions.
- Q We have heard from other nurses about the nurses' duty to challenge if they think that something is being done to a patient which is wrong – personal responsibility. You are nodding but is that a concept you understand?
A Yes, definitely.
- D Q Is there any difference between the duty of a State Registered Nurse to the duty of a State Enrolled Nurse?
A No.
- Q So as a State Enrolled Nurse would part of your training be to challenge if you think something was being done wrong?
A Yes.
- E Q It follows from this, it would appear, that you did not and would not have challenged this.
A That I do not know. I might have challenged but it might have been overruled, is all I can say.
- F Q If you challenged something, if you had been uncomfortable with something would you have made a note about it or not?
A I would have done, but ---
- G Q Right.
A Yes.
- Q Can we look at it a little further. Going back to the Redcliff, up until getting to the Redcliff had you dealt much with diamorphine?
A No.
- H Q Once you were on the Redcliff and the syringe drivers were introduced you began to deal with diamorphine.

- A A Yes.
- Q Did you have any special training about diamorphine?
A Not really, no.
- Q So do we take it from that that your knowledge came from your working on the job, as it were?
A Yes.
- B Q And you were working on the job at Redcliff when these concerns arose in 1991.
A That is right.
- Q And you had training about syringe drivers.
A We did have courses when we moved up to Dryad.
- C Q Tell us about those?
A We used to attend – it was in the medical centre from the hospices, Countess Mountbatten; they would put on lectures, sort of workshops every so often.
- Q Did those increase your understanding of the use of diamorphine?
A Yes, it did.
- D Q Did they increase your understanding of how you were meant to increase it?
A It did.
- Q Can you remember when those took place?
A What year?
- E Q Yes.
A It must have been ... I cannot remember when we moved up – between about 1992 and ... I cannot remember how long they went on for ... Up to about 2000; I do not know, that is just a guess.
- Q We can see the end of your note at page 395 is:
A “His daughter has enquired.”
A “Daughter has enquired. 8 o’clock Ruby’s condition.”
- Q Shortly after making this note can we take it you would have gone off duty?
A I would have gone off duty.
- Q Because 08.00 hours was actually beyond the time that you are meant to be there.
G A Yes. Unfortunately, this is what makes me think if that decision might not have just been staff alone; but there is no documentation to prove that.
- Q What time did Dr Barton generally come on to the ward?
A Any time between half past seven and quarter to eight in the morning.
- Q So she might or might not have been around when this decision was made?
H A I do not know.

A Q You make other entries in this lady's notes. I do not want to waste time. The note that you have made about the patient being distressed when moved, that may of course be an indication of pain.

A It could have been, yes.

B Q I want you to glance through the previous notes. Is there any other indication by you about the patient's pain? I think this is the only note you have made, in fact.

A I think that is the only entry I have made.

MR JENKINS: 388?

MR KARK: Hold on, Mr Jenkins. In relation to that point of you being present when the syringe driver was increased, that is the only note I think you made in the summary of significant events.

C A On that particular page, yes.

Q We have also seen that there are nursing care plans to deal with various aspects of the patients' care.

A Yes.

D Q And there are nursing care plans to deal with wounds and catheters and the like.

A That is correct.

Q Can I ask you to go through some of the nursing care plans that we have? Mr Jenkins has invited your attention to 388 and also I am going to ask you to look at 389. On 388 first of all, is that your note at the bottom?

A It is.

E Q I think we can read:

"Condition continues to deteriorate ..."

This is 20 August.

A Yes.

F Q Is it "remains very 'bubbly' suction attempted without success."

A Yes.

Q So this appears to be reflecting your note on the summary?

A That is right, yes.

G Q When would you make this note?

A That would have been some time during the night.

Q And we see again the words, "distressed when turned"; so it is exactly the same words.

A It is, yes.

H Q Why do you have to make two separate notes about this?

A A Because this one is in a care plan and the other one is a summary of medical hist... of significant events.

Q 389 is not your writing, is it?

A No.

Q Can I ask you about your knowledge in relation to another issue. This lady was on a syringe driver. Would she have been receiving any hydration?

B A That I do not know.

Q If a patient was unable to swallow was there any system that you remember on Dryad Ward of hydrating a patient?

A Is this in relation to this patient?

Q Any patient.

C A On occasions we could have put down a nasogastric tube or subcut fluids.

Q In what circumstances would you use a nasogastric tube?

A If a patient is unable to swallow.

Q Would you insert a nasogastric tube?

D A In those days? If it was written up in the medical notes; if it was a doctor's decision.

Q I think I can tell you in relation to that, none of the patients that we are dealing with is there any indication a nasogastric tube was used – certainly not for this patient.

A Sorry, can you repeat that.

Q I will stick to this patient for the moment. There is no indication for this patient that a nasogastric tube was used.

E A That is correct.

Q You mentioned subcut fluids as well; do you remember those being used?

A On this patient?

Q On Dryad Ward?

A On occasions.

F Q If it was used, if a subcut needle was inserted and fluids were being put into the patient by that system would a note be made about it?

A Definitely.

Q I am going to ask you to put that file away. I am trying to deal with these patients chronologically and if you could turn to file G and if you go to page 647.

G I am not going to spend very long, unless you have a specific recollection of this patient, and I think you have previously indicated that you do not. Could you look at 647 first of all? That is the clinical note that shows that he was transferred to Dryad Ward on 21 May 2008 and can you see the words "make comfortable"?

A Yes.

Q Then "give adequate analgesia" – this is the top note made by Dr Barton.

H A Yes.

A

Q "Am happy for nursing staff to confirm death".

A Yes.

Q Can I ask you a little bit about those expressions? "Make comfortable" – how did you understand that?

B

A To ensure that the patient is not in any distress; give him all the nursing care required; and that would be to make sure that they are not in pain as well.

Q Would it be any indicator to you of the state of the patient?

A Yes, it would mean that the patient is probably very poorly, at the end of life care.

Q We see the words at the bottom "am happy for nursing staff to confirm death". Is that a note that you remember seeing?

C

A Yes, it is.

Q Fairly frequently.

A Yes.

Q Is that any indication of the state of the patient?

A That the patient is very poorly.

D

Q Is it also an indication to you as nursing staff that you are entitled to do something that without that note you would not be entitled to do?

A Yes.

Q To verify death?

A Yes.

E

Q In fact the word used is to "confirm death"; that does not mean certify death because you are not allowed to certify death?

A No, it is to confirm.

Q If we look at the rest of the page do we see your writing on this page?

A Yes.

F

Q Just above your writing we can see another entry, 25 September, "On syringe driver. For TLC".

A Yes.

Q "TLC" is a similar expression?

A It is; it means tender loving care.

G

Q Meaning in reality?

A That the patient is going to die.

Q Then we can see the next entry and that is yours?

A That is right, yes.

H

A Q “Brian condition continued to deteriorate and died” and then you have gone through the various tests to ensure that you are not making a mistake.

A Yes.

Q And that the patient truly has died. Then that has been signed by you, and who else was present?

A Senior Staff Nurse Tubritt.

B

Q Then is it “family notified” ---

A “And visited”.

Q I think in fact – unfortunately, perhaps – that was your only dealing with this patient. In any event, if you have made other notes your recollection is extremely limited.

A It is.

C

Q Can we put this file away, please, and go to file I? File I is dealing with a lady called Enid Spurgin. I am going to ask you to turn up page 132. They do not follow necessarily one after the other so you will find a couple of gaps in the page numbers. This is not your note, but if we look at the beginning of the page we can see that she had been admitted on 26 March of 1990 to your hospital for rehabilitation and gentle mobilisation.

D

“In Haslar she was mobile with a Zimmer frame and two nurses – short distances, and apparently transferring satisfactorily. However, transfer has been difficult here since admission. She has complained of a lot of pain for which she is receiving Oramorph regularly now with effect.”

Is Oramorph something that you would on occasion administer?

A Yes.

E

Q Being a member of night staff would you use it on occasion to help the patient sleep?

A Not necessarily sleep; it is for pain control – Oramorph – if she was in pain.

Q “Eats and drinks with encouragement. Can feed herself. Is a little deaf. Night. Requires much assistance with mobility at present due to pain discomfort. Oramorph 10 mgs. 5 mls given 23.15 and 5 mgs given at 06.50.”

F

Is that your significant?

A It is.

Q That is on the night of her admission and we could just have a quick look at the drugs chart – if we go to page 164 – if we look at the first entry on page 164 we can see that there is a prescription for Oramorph, which I think must be prescribed on the 20... It is difficult for us now to read the date, but it looks as if it must be 26 March because that is the first date in the calendar at the top; yes?

A Mm hmm; yes.

G

Q Does your writing appear there? Have you administered any of that?

A No.

H

- A Q Then if you look down toward the bottom, we can see the second entry up from the bottom, some Oramorph was provided on 27 March at 2200 hours. I am trying to find your entry for 26th and I cannot at the moment.
- A Is that the Oramorph at 2200 on 26th?
- Q Do you mean the second one up from the bottom?
- B A There is one on 27th and from what I have got here, there is Oramorph 10 mg in 5 mls at 2200 administered on 26th. That is not my signature.
- Q If you were providing Oramorph to a patient, would you necessarily be the one making an entry?
- A Not necessarily, no. There are two trained staff.
- C Q And your reason for giving Oramorph, and perhaps you have already explained it, would be what?
- A If the patient is in pain.
- Q And your reason for giving Oramorph at this level; how would you ascertain how much to give?
- A You would start with the minimum dose first of all.
- D Q You would start with the minimum dose. If a prescription is written at 10 milligrams in 5 mls, do you have to give 5 mls?
- A No. It has got here from 2 to 5 --- 2.5 mls to 5 mls.
- Q So could you give anywhere within that range?
- A Within that range, yes.
- E Q I think you also made a note on the same day. Perhaps you can just confirm this is your writing on page 144, going aback a few pages. Helpfully or unhelpfully it has 114 written in manuscript but it is 144 with a line outside of it. Is that your writing on there?
- A It is.
- Q We can see that there are entries for 26 March and we can see under "Nursing action"
- F "Assist with the use of slipper pan. Enid will request when needed."
- Then underneath that, and I think that is your signature, for 26 March,
- "Use slipper pan with assistance as required."
- A Yes.
- G Q Whose writing is that?
- A That line is my writing.
- Q That is an entry made at night. Yes?
- A It is.
- H Q Does that indicate that Enid was capable at that stage of calling for the assistance of a slipper pan?

A A It does, yes.

Q So it follows that she at that stage must have been conscious?

A Yes.

Q Does your writing appear elsewhere on the page? I think you made all of the initial entries?

B A Yes, from the top until the second line from the bottom. The one after that is not my writing.

Q Again, I think you have made other notes in relation to this patient but I think that there is no need for me to ask about those. My learned friends may do in due course. I am going to move on to the next patient. That is file J, please, and there are some questions I want to ask you about this gentleman. This is Mr Geoffrey Packman. I think you do have some recollection of this patient, is that right? Let me just remind you. Go to page 64 of the notes, please. First of all, do you see your writing on that page?

C A Yes, I do.

Q Help us, please, is it where it says "nocte"?

A Yes, "nocte".

D Q Can we just look at the entry before that? "Dr Reid here." We were looking at this note yesterday with another witness:

"Syringe driver renewed at 19:15. Diamorphine 60 mgs and midazolam 60 mgms as previous dose not controlling symptoms. Dressings removed this afternoon. Mrs Packman has visited this afternoon and is aware of poor condition. Mrs Packman being admitted to (another) ward for surgery. Please contact her in the event of Mick's death."

E Then what is the next bit?

A "No night calls please".

Q Then your entry is what, please?

A "Incontinent of black tarry faeces on settling."

F Q Then "Peaceful night".

A "Peaceful night. All care given. Syringe driver satisfactory."

Q Can we just pause there for a moment and think about that note. What does that signify to you?

G A If the patient had been on iron, that could have caused his black tarry faeces.

Q What else?

A It could mean that he could be having an internal bleed.

Q I think we know in fact he was having a gastrointestinal bleed. When you made that note, first of all, would you take any action upon that discovery, apart from making a note?

H A I would have reported it at hand-over and definitely made a point of handing that over.

- A
- Q It may be obvious but why would you have made a point of handing that over in relation to it?
- A Because it needed some investigation.
- Q Would you expect there to be investigation?
- A Yes.
- B
- Q Would you expect there to be a care plan of some sort or a change of care plan?
- A I would have thought so, yes.
- Q Would you be responsible for initiating such a care plan or not?
- A Then not necessarily.
- C
- Q The next note: "Diamorphine increased to 90 mgms" is not yours?
- A No.
- Q Where you have written simply "syringe driver reprimed" would that be with the same drugs as before?
- A I do not think -- That one is not my writing.
- D
- Q I am sorry. I just want to understand this then. Against the word "nocte" we can see "incontinent of black tarry faeces on settling. Peaceful night. All care given." Then "Syringe driver satisfactory".
- A Yes.
- Q Then your signature appears on that line?
- A Yes.
- E
- Q Then underneath that, "Syringe driver reprimed".
- A That is another entry.
- Q I beg your pardon. That is relevant to "diamorphine increased to 90 mgms"?
- A Yes.
- F
- Q Would you have had any responsibility for that decision?
- A No. That one has nothing to do with me.
- Q I think the next day the patient died and that is not your writing?
- A No.
- G
- Q Could you go to page 80, which is the nursing care plan, and I think it is probably going to reflect what we have just looked at but perhaps you can confirm that for us. This is the nursing care plan for Mr Packman. Do you see your writing on that page?
- A Yes.
- Q Is that for 31 August, first of all?
- A Yes.
- H
- Q Help us with that entry. Perhaps I should have dealt with this one first?

- A A The "peaceful night"?
- Q Yes?
- A "Incontinent of black tarry faeces +++ nil taken by mouth. Remains hot."
- Q I am sorry; I have dealt with them the wrong way round. That is entirely my fault. When you make a note "31 August '99 Peaceful night" is that relating to the night of 30th or the night of 31 August?
- B A 31 August.
- Q Again, do your comments about black tarry faeces obviously apply?
- A Yes.
- Q The fact that he is nil taken by mouth, is that another factor that you would consider? Is that relevant?
- C A Yes, because he obviously was not able to take or he has not taken fluids for a reason; he is unable to take fluids.
- Q Is that why you have made a note of that?
- A Yes.
- D Q Is that something that might be a signal for others to act upon?
- A Yes.
- Q Would you go over finally to page 175, please? Do you see the entry for Oramorph up at the top?
- A I do, yes.
- E Q Did you administer any of that, can you help us?
- A Not on the first line.
- Q Do you see your writing anywhere on that page?
- A Yes, the second line down, the "Oramorph 20 mgs", which is written up at 2200.
- Q Do you mean the second box down?
- F A Yes, dated 27th and 28th.
- Q So that means that you administered that drug at 20 mgs, and that was written up?
- A Yes.
- Q If it is written up in that way, that is not under the "as required" form; it is a regular prescription?
- G A A regular prescription, that is right.
- Q You would give that automatically?
- A Yes.
- Q I am sorry, I have missed one other note which I should have mentioned in passing, page 82, please. Again it may be self-explanatory but have you made the note right at the top on 2 September?
- H

A A Yes, I have.

Q "Incontinent of weak tarry...."

A "...of black tarry faeces on settling".

Q It is "black", I am so sorry. The same as before?

B A Yes, "Nursed on side. Peaceful night – strong radial pulse – opens eyes when spoken to."

Q So that would demonstrate what to you?

A That he responds when spoken to.

Q Is that the same as being rousable or is rousable something different?

A No, that would mean that he is rousable.

C MR KARK: Then the next entry I think is not yours. That is all that I ask you about that patient.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a good opportunity for the break. The panel assistant will take you to another place again and we will come back at 12.25.

D (The Panel adjourned for a short time)

MR KARK: I want to go back to one issue with patient F, Ruby Lake. If I could invite the Panel to go back in the notes of Patient F and go to page 368E, Mr Jenkins raised a concern and he is absolutely right. It is very difficult to read on our copy 368E but I have misread the bottom entry of diamorphine. Do you see the entry at the bottom that I read as 60? Mr Jenkins' view is that it is clearly a 40 and I am afraid he is right.

E MR JENKINS: Looking at the original is of great assistance so can I suggest that the witness is shown it and then each Member of the Panel is shown the original because there is red writing. "Destroyed" is written in red and the prescription is written in black ink and it is much easier to see the black ink when you look at the original.

F MR KARK: I am going to do that. I am also going to show the witness the drugs record. I will show it to the witness first and then to the Panel. (Same handed) When you look at that can you see more clearly that that is 40 and not 60?

A It is 40.

Q Could that be shown to the Panel? If you want to look at it you are very welcome, but also the drugs book confirms that because you could not get 40mg ampoules, could you, of diamorphine?

G A No.

Q Whether you could or not, I think what was withdrawn was a 30mg ampoule and a 10mg ampoule.

A Yes, that is right.

H

A Q Would you just take it from me, and you can certainly look at this if you wish to, that at 16:55 on 20 August the controlled drug record shows that a 30mg ampoule and a 10mg ampoule was withdrawn at 16:55 on 20 August for Ruby Lake.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, is it right that the observation Mr Jenkins made in respect of the diamorphine is also true of the midazolam?

B MR KARK: I think it will be, yes. I would have to check that. The two entries here are flagged in pink. Could I invite people to exercise caution because the spine has gone and all the pages will fall out. I do not know if the Panel want to see that now.

THE CHAIRMAN: The original seems quite clear.

C MR KARK: It also means that our chronology is missing an entry but the new improved chronologies, which have been worked on extensively, will have that in. I do not think we need to go through that at the moment. (To the witness): Apologies if I led you into error on that. It appears as if the entry prior to your night entry of 60 was 40.

A Yes.

D Q We can put that away for the moment. Finally, in relation to the patients can I take you on to a lady called Elsie Devine, our Patient K, starting at page 195. Do you have a recollection of Elsie Devine?

A A very vague one.

Q What does your vague recollection tell you about this patient?

A I think she required a lot of nursing care at night. That is basically it.

E Q She came to Dryad Ward on 21 October 1999. I think the first entry where you made a note is at the back end of her treatment. Can you see your notes on this page?

A I can, yes.

Q Tell us where they are and tell us what you noted?

A An entry dated 19/11/99.

F Q Tell us what you have said?

A "Relatives stayed until 2300. Elsie has had a peaceful night. Syringe driver satisfactory. Position changed as required."

There is another entry on 20/11/99 which reads:

G "Peaceful night – position changed regularly – skin marking – extremities remain oedematous. Oral care given."

And my signature.

Q The fact that you had to change this patient's position, what, if anything, would that indicate to you?

H

A A That the patient was unable to turn over in bed and she needed her position changed. She needed help in changing her position. That she was quite poorly as well that she could not move herself.

Q Poorly by reason of what?

A It could be her medical condition.

B Q If a patient is on a syringe driver what other reason could there be for her not being able to move herself?

A It could be that she was unable to move herself because she could not move herself.

Q Why would that be?

A It could be because of her poor condition or it could have been due to sedation of the syringe driver.

C Q Could you go to pages 223-224. Page 223 reflects her admission to your ward. Is that right?

A That is correct, yes.

Q With increasing confusion and aggression but I think she is also described as "very pleasant". At the bottom of the page we can see the note: "Marked deterioration". I do not think your writing appears on that page, does it?

D A No.

Q Over to page 224, did you make a note of the care given to this patient?

A I did on nocte.

Q To identify it, it is 19 November still.

E A Yes, it is. I have written:

"Peaceful night – syringe driver satisfactory. Position changed as required. Syringe driver recharged at 07:35. Diamorphine 40mg, midazolam 40mg."

And I have signed that entry.

F Q The time that you made that entry, first of all is that an indication that you or your colleague recharged the syringe driver?

A Yes, it is.

Q Would you have taken any steps to review in any way the drugs that the patient had been on or would you simply be dealing with the drugs that they were then on? What would you do, if anything, looking at the previous drug chart?

G A We would have obviously looked at the drug chart, seen what drugs she had been on or what drugs she was on.

Q Does your writing appear elsewhere on that page?

A Yes, further down the page, the night of 20/11/99 nocte I have written:

H

A "Peaceful night – skin marking. Position changed regularly. Extremities remain oedematous. Syringe driver recharged 07:15. Diamorphine 40mg and midazolam 40mg"

And the rate that it was going.

B Q Could you keep a finger there and go to page 281, which is the drug chart. We can see that the prescription written by Dr Barton for this patient starts on 19 November.

A Yes.

Q It follows perhaps from what you said that you would not have played a role in the decision to initiate the syringe driver.

A That is right, yes.

C Q Because when you came on at night your role, as I have understood it, might be to recharge it but you were not starting it.

A That is correct.

Q When it was recharged you recharged it, as we can see, at the minimum dose provided for by Dr Barton.

A That is correct, yes.

D Q And you were continuing the previous dose.

A Yes.

Q When you make reference to "a peaceful night" should we read that as anybody would normally read that?

A Yes.

E Q There is no special nursing indication?

A No.

Q And no indication of the patient being in any pain?

A That is right.

F Q When nurses make reference to a "poorly" condition, as we can see in the note following yours, does that have any particular significance?

A No.

Q At page 281 do your initials appear against any of these entries?

A Yes, they do on the date 20/11 and 21/11.

G Q Is that 7:35 and 7:15 in the morning?

A Yes. My colleague has also initialled it as well.

Q You are the one with your colleague who has carried on the syringe driver at the same level as before.

A Yes.

H Q Would you have known what caused the initiation of the syringe driver?

A A If a patient's condition has deteriorated or if she was in pain or something.

Q That is what you would expect.

A Yes.

Q The note that you have made that we have just looked at "extremities remain oedematous", we understand what it means but what does that arise from?

B A It can be her general medical condition.

Q I asked you earlier, and I just want to have your evidence clear, in relation to any of these patients – we see on occasion that patients were distressed when turned –but if there are signs of pain from a patient you will make a note of it.

A Definitely.

C Q We can put that patient away and again you may be asked about other entries you have made but that is all that I ask you. When you left Dryad Ward where did you go onto?

A From Dryad we went to Haslar.

Q You went to Haslar.

A The unit moved. I have always been on that ward but we had to go to Haslar for refurbishment of the War Memorial and now I am back on Collingwood Ward.

D Q Was that after Dr Barton had left?

A Yes, that is a different trust, still in the War Memorial. I am still there but in a different trust and on a different type of ward.

Q After Dr Barton had left you came presumably under the responsibility of other doctors?

E A Yes.

Q How did the use of opiates and syringe drivers change, if they did?

A They were not used so often and there was definitely the perimeters changed if we do set up a syringe driver.

Q Do you mean the variable dose?

F A The doses, yes.

Q In what way have they changed?

A The patients have to have IM diamorphine. I am not medically qualified obviously. They might have to have diamorphine written up IM.

Q Intra-muscular?

G A Yes, for a few doses and then that is reviewed and then it is decided and the perimeters are set of how to set up a syringe driver. Doses are much lower.

MR KARK: Does are much lower. Thank you. Wait there, please.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Jenkins, given the time that we have reached, would you prefer to break for lunch now and then have a full run at it, as it were, after lunch?

H

A MR JENKINS: I hope I will not be having a full run. I am entirely in your hands. I can start now or whenever is convenient.

THE CHAIRMAN: We would only have about 15 minutes now and then we would be breaking, so we will break now for lunch and Mr Jenkins can start afresh at a quarter to two. I remind you that you remain on oath and you should not speak to anybody about the case and of course nor should anybody speak to you about the case.

B

(Luncheon adjournment)

Cross-examined by MR JENKINS

MR JENKINS: Ms Turnbull, you will remember me, I think; I asked you a few questions in the inquest a couple of months ago.

C

A You did, yes.

Q What we have heard is that in the late 1980s, beginning of the 1990s Dr Barton was working as the clinical assistant at the War Memorial Hospital.

A That is correct.

D

Q And that syringe drivers were being introduced for some of the patients.

A That is right, yes.

Q You had not dealt with syringe drivers before?

A That is correct, yes.

E

Q And you have never been trained in their use.

A That is right.

Q You would have certainly known that opiates were being administered for those patients who had syringe drivers.

A Yes.

F

Q And as night staff you were expected to be able to deal with those patients and nurse them appropriately.

A Mm hmm.

Q And that must have been, knowing that drivers like diamorphine were being used, rather worrying for you.

A Yes.

G

Q And the other nursing staff working nights that we have heard about are Nurse Giffin and Nurse Tubritt.

A Yes.

Q I think the hospital had not arranged for any training for you.

A That is correct, yes.

H

Q So how did you learn about syringe drivers and where their use might be appropriate and how they should be changed and set up?

- A A I cannot remember. I think at first it was just with the management of them as they had been set up, because on nights we very rarely set up a driver and were just managing them.
- Q Was there a night sister you could call to help?
- A There was, but she was based up at the ... This is the Redcliff Ward?
- B Q Yes.
- A She was based up at the War Memorial.
- Q So would this be fair, that in the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s as night staff you were left treating patients where you were not confident that you knew about the syringe drivers?
- A I think we were confident and we could manage the syringe drivers, yes.
- C Q What we have seen obviously are some letters and some other documents, notes of meetings from 1991.
- A Yes, that is right.
- Q And what lay behind that was a concern about the use of diamorphine.
- A Yes.
- D Q And it was concern that the nursing staff dealing with patients during the day were not taking into account the views of the night staff.
- A Not totally. I think that some of the night staff, as mentioned in the letters, our concerns were perhaps other analgesics had not been considered before the syringe driver.
- Q Were there problems between the day staff and the night staff other than with regard to ...
- E A No, not at first; no.
- Q Not at first?
- A Not until that period.
- Q What was the feedback that night staff got from Sister Hamblin?
- F A That was a pretty negative one.
- Q Tell us what you mean by that?
- A We felt there was not much support there.
- Q Would we be right to interpret what was happening at the beginning of the 1990s as a difference of view between the day staff and the night staff?
- G A Only where the use of syringe drivers were concerned.
- Q I think it is right that a lot of the day staff thought that you did not know what you were talking about.
- A Not all the day staff, I do not think.
- Q We will come back to 1991 but what you told the coroner in the inquest – tell me if this is right – was that all the concerns that there may have been in 1991 were all resolved.
- H A That is correct, yes.

- A
- Q And by the time of the patients that you were being asked about the inquest – 1996 and thereafter – all the earlier concerns from 1991 had been dealt with.
- A That was right, yes.
- B
- Q Is this right, that to that extent what happened in 1991 is part of the history but it is not relevant to what happened with patients in 1996 and the others that you have been asked about here.
- A That is probably true, yes.
- Q I am grateful. You were asked by Mr Kark what diamorphine was being used for on the ward and you told us it was used for distress.
- A Yes.
- C
- Q For excessive secretions?
- A Umm, yes.
- Q For some breathing problems.
- A Yes.
- D
- Q I think you learned that after 1991.
- A Probably, yes.
- Q But in 1991 you did not know that.
- A I do not think that was considered in 1991; it did not come into the issue then.
- E
- Q I think the concerns in 1991 had been that patients seemed to be getting diamorphine who were not in pain.
- A That is correct, yes.
- Q But you were then to learn that you do not just give diamorphine to patients because of pain – there may be other reasons to give it.
- A That is correct, yes.
- F
- Q And you have mentioned some of them already – distress, excessive secretions or some breathing problems.
- A Yes.
- Q It helps with patients who have breathing difficulties or a sense of breathlessness.
- A That is right.
- G
- Q For patients who have excessive secretions – chest secretions – is it your understanding that they feel as if they are drowning?
- A They can be, yes.
- Q And although they may be getting medication to try and reduce the secretions – analgesics, this kind of drug can lift them out of that sense of drowning or the fear or it.
- A It can do, yes.
- H

- A Q That is your experience.
A Yes.
Q Again, I suggest that at the time that concerns were raised in 1991 none of that had been explained to you or the other night staff.
A That is right, yes.
- B Q Your approach was that people should only be on a syringe driver – on diamorphine, if they are in pain?
A I believe so, yes.
- Q But you were told that that was not right and you now know that that is not right.
A That is right, yes.
- C Q Let us go to the documents in 1991 again, if we may, just to confirm that picture, as I suggest they do. Do you have bundle 1 in front of you, it is tab 6?
I think the front page wrongly describes the document that we have at page 2. The document is the summary of the meeting held on 11 July 1991.
A Yes.
- D Q You have been taken through that and I do not propose to do so again, but the first concern that is listed is that not all patients who were given diamorphine had pain.
A That is right.
- Q If we go over the page to point number 10, these are the points that Mrs Evans was making and after point number 10 she is saying:
“It is evident no one present had sufficient knowledge to answer various questions ...”
- E And she said there were the following questions:
“What effect does diamorphine have?
Are all the symptoms that are being attributed to diamorphine in fact due to other drugs patients are receiving, or event their medical condition?
Is it appropriate to give diamorphine for other distressing symptoms other than pain.”
- F A Yes.
- G Q If we go on through that tab, we have seen the correspondence with the Royal College of Nursing, in which the question of a policy is raised and we then get to the notes of the meeting. But let us just look at tab 6, page 17. I do not know whether you can tell us whether you got this or not, Ms Turnbull; this was one of the documents you later handed over to Toni Scammell, so one assumes you did get this.
A I think I might have done, yes.
- H Q Where in the middle paragraph Isobel Evans is saying:

A "I am therefore writing to all the trained staff asking for the names of any patients that they feel diamorphine (or any other drug) has been prescribed inappropriately."

A Yes.

Q And she was hoping for everyone's cooperation. We see the next memo from her at page 21, which again is addressed to all trained staff at Redcliff, and she says:

B "Due to the lack of response to my memo of 7 November ..."

And page 17 was the memo of 7 November:

"Dr Logan will be able to comment on specific cases. However, we have arranged a meeting for all members of staff who have concerns on the prescribing of diamorphine ..."

C And it sets out the date, 17 December. She says:

"It is not our intention to make this meeting in any way threatening ... our aim is purely to allay any concerns staff may have."

A Yes.

D Q Does it follow that you certainly did not notify Isobel Evans of any specific cases where you had concerns?

A I cannot remember because it was a long time ago, but I do not think I did.

Q I cannot ask you whether others did or did not but we have seen what her memorandum says. We then go to page 23 – and you have been asked about this document. It is not clear whose note it is but the initials at the end on the last page, page 25, may suggest that it was dictated by Isobel Evans.

E A I would have thought so, yes.

Q I do not need to ask you about page 23. You were asked about page 24 and the numbered points at the top, in which Mrs Evans set out the concerns as she understood them to be. We then have on the bottom half of that page an indication of what Dr Robert Logan said to the staff.

F A Yes. What page was that one?

Q 24; the one with the letters (a) to (h).

A Yes.

G Q I hope you have had the chance to read it. Can you confirm that that is broadly what he said?

A It was a long time ago but obviously he must have said that, yes.

Q Dr Logan was a consultant in geriatric medicine.

A That is right.

Q Was he the consultant responsible for the patients on Redcliff?

H A At that time I cannot ... He was one of them anyway.

A

Q I understand. So if there were patients admitted to Redcliff he was a consultant who had responsibility for the treatment that those patients were to receive.

A I would have thought so, but as I said it was a long time ago and I cannot really remember. He could have well been at the time, yes.

B

Q I do not need to take you through his various points. Reference is made in this note at letter (g) of:

“The difficulty of accurately assessing levels of discomfort with patients who were not able to express themselves fully or had multiple medical problems, and the decision to prescribe for those patients had therefore to be made on professional judgment, based on knowledge of patient’s condition, to enable patient to be nursed comfortably.

C

A That is right.

Q Were there discussions as well that the day staff may well have a different perception of patients because they were able to do more for them than the night staff.

A That was possibly true, yes.

D

Q What we know is that if things were working well patients would be asleep at night.

A If they were comfortable, yes; if patients were comfortable.

Q How many night staff would there be on Redcliff, and for how many patients – roughly? Was it two?

A Around about this time it probably would have been three but sometimes it could have been ... No, I think it was two or three ---

E

Q And how many day staff would they have on Redcliff?

A ... because we increased the patients. Day staff, I cannot really remember.

Q Significantly more than the night staff.

A About four, five, because it was not a big unit.

F

Q At point (h) Dr Logan said that:

“It was not acceptable for patients who are deteriorating terminally and require two-hourly turning, to have pain or distress during this process. They require analgesia even if they are content between these times.”

A That is right.

G

Q Was the point also being made – if you turn to page 25 it is there at letter C – that patients were not always comfortable during the day, even if they had slept during the night.

A Yes.

Q Was that an issue that was being discussed? That patients may appear to night staff to be comfortable and yet in the day time they might be distressed or showing signs of agitation or discomfort when they were being nursed during the day.

A Yes.

H

A Q If we are still on page 25 can you confirm – it is the second paragraph up from the bottom – that people were asked if they felt there was any need for a policy and that no one thought that it was appropriate.

A That was true.

B Q If you go back to the RCN letters earlier in that bundle, page 10 or page 11, I think they may be the same letter, Code A the Royal College of Nursing officer, refers to the memorandum to the staff dated 7 November, the one that we have looked at on page 17, and he deals with it in this way by saying at the end of the third paragraph, “We now expect a clear policy to be agreed.”

A That is right, yes.

C Q At the time of the meeting which was clearly convened four weeks or so after that, staff were saying effectively they did not need one?

A Yes.

Q I wonder if I could ask you to turn on in that bundle because, starting at page 26 to see what it is, it says it is typed minutes of that same meeting. Do you have page 26?

A I do.

D Q “Minutes at Redclyffe Annex, 17/12/91” – that is the meeting you were at. “(Typed minutes)”. We see it is produced by Robert Frederick Logan and, if we turn over, I think we will see that it is indeed Dr Logan’s own typed note of that meeting. I say we see it is his because he tells us what it was that he said and that ties up with the minutes that you were asked to look at on pages 23 to 25.

A Yes.

E Q I am going to take you through this, if I may, and ask if you agree that this was what was said. Yes?

A Yes.

Q “Isabel Evans started by saying how pleased she was that we were at last talking face to face since she was concerned that developments were having an adverse effect on patient care, putting undue strain on Jane in particular...”

F – meaning Dr Barton I think?

A Yes.

Q “...and also leading to rumours some of which were rather distorted being spread outside the unit.

“She then – ”

G – meaning Isabel Evans,

“invited me to talk in general terms about the use of opiates in the long stay wards. I expressed the view that it was often very difficult to know what was best for very frail elderly patients who couldn’t clearly express their symptoms, and that one could only do one’s best in interpreting them. I felt when there was any question that the patients had pain then they should be given the benefit of analgesia. Unfortunately

H

A there were no really very useful middle range drugs between Codeine and Dihydrocodeine and Diamorphine. I also explained that, besides the pain relieving properties Diamorphine and Morphine had very useful psychological effects producing some psychological detachment and euphoria which can do much for a patient's tranquillity. I said that it was, however, vital for us to make sure that there were not more simple reasons for the patient's pain or distress, such as a full bladder or faecal impaction that could be quite simply dealt with. Having established that and being content that the patient was distressed and probably in pain, then one should not hesitate to use opiate analgesia if necessary. Obviously the oral route is the best if the patient can manage it, but if not, as is often the case, then injections or sub-cutaneous infusion were perfectly acceptable. I said I felt it was vital that a team effort should be maintained, and that this would obviously require good communication of one's observations and views to other members of the team rather than involving third parties."

C Did you know who he meant by third parties? Do not worry.

A No.

Q Can you remember this being said? Are you able to agree that this is ---

A I cannot remember what it said but is written down. It was a long time ago. Yes, obviously it must have been said.

D Q He goes on:

"Staff Nurse Giffin then said that it seemed to be routine now for patients to receive opiates before they died and she questioned whether this was necessary. I said that I agreed entirely, it was not necessary for the patient who was tranquil and apparently asymptomatic. On occasions a patient would only become distressed when disturbed, for example when two-hourly turning was necessary. I explained that I felt in these circumstances the patient should have this pain dealt with, even if it was only transient and intermittent. I am not sure if she accepted this view or not. I think we were all agreed that when opiates were given there was no need for the patient to be rendered totally unconscious. Far from it, the aim was to keep the patient comfortable, but as awake as possible. She expressed a wish that, in the future should she have any misgivings, she should be able to discuss these with me. I said I was fully in agreement with this, but that I should not become her first contact. It was vital that she discussed any problems with Dr Barton or Sister Hamblin first. I said it was a bad idea that they should be short circuited. I tried to get across the idea that although the night staff perception of how much discomfort the patient was experiencing may be different to the day staff's, they should accept the observations of their colleagues. The general concept that improved communications between day and night staff and between night staff and medical staff might help in the future was met with little apparent enthusiasm from Staff Nurse Giffin."

I do not think she was persuaded?

A She was not, no.

Q Was it being made quite clear by the medical staff, the consultant at the meeting and perhaps the more experienced nursing staff that it was appropriate to use opiates and indeed

H

A syringe drivers with diamorphine, even for patients who may not be in constant pain but for those who might be in discomfort intermittently?

A It was, yes.

Q And so are we now at the position, or were you in 1996 certainly of the view that diamorphine via a syringe driver may well be appropriate for a patient who does not have pain but who may be showing signs of distress or agitation or have secretions, excessive secretions, or breathing problems?

B A Yes.

Q That is what you told us?

A Yes.

Q Can I turn to Patent F please very briefly? This is the only patient I am going to ask you about, or the only patient rather in relation to whom I am going to show you some records. We have looked with this patient, you will recall, at the prescription sheet on page 368E. We know now that this lady was started on a syringe driver on 20 August, the syringe driver with 20 mg of diamorphine in and I think 20 mg of midazolam. You were not involved in that because you would not have been on duty in the morning at 9.15 on 20th?

C A That is right.

Q What we have heard and what I think you said to the police in your statement was that it was 40 mgms of diamorphine given at 16.50 and 40 mgms of midazolam?

A Yes.

Q Would you have been on at that time, 16.50?

A No.

E MR JENKINS: That is, I am going to suggest, what the prescription sheet, 368E, says, 16.50. I think we heard that the drug book for that day shows an entry in the name Shirley Hallman for 16.55 for a 30 mgm ampoule of diamorphine. I am sure we can look at it and check it if there is a need to do so. I am looking across the room to see if the drug book is to hand. If it is checked over that side of the room, that is fine by me.

F MR KARK: I hand it over to Mr Jenkins. It is the two pink tabs I think. (Same handed to Mr Jenkins)

MR JENKINS: If I can just hand it to the witness. (Same handed to witness) I do not know if you made entries in this book, Ms Turnbull. It is where the pink sticky is. What you are being shown I hope and what you can see are entries for 20 August and in the first entry you see that a 10 mg ampoule of diamorphine is signed for by Shirley Hallman on 20 August at 16.55.

G A Yes.

Q And a second sticker shows a 30 mg ampoule taken by Shirley Hallman at the same time, 16.55 on 20 August.

A That is right.

Q Both with the patient's name as Ruby Lake?

H A Yes.

A
 Q Those, I suggest, relate to what is written up on page 368E at 16.50 – 40 mgs.
 A Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Jenkins, there is some concern at this end. Dr Smith was asking whether he could clarify something on the paper.

B
 MR JENKINS: Would he like to see the original record?

DR SMITH: No, it is all right. I take what you say. On 368E on the prescription, do you say that the time 16.50 is under what you described as the red overwriting before?

MR JENKINS: I think it is. I am going to suggest it is easier if the Panel have the original prescription chart so they can look at it. The different ink makes it so much easier to see. What we have seen, and you have the drug book, is that at 16.55 Shirley Hallman has signed for the drugs in the drug book on 20 August?

C
 A She did, yes.

(Drug book shown to members of the Panel)

D
 MR KARK: May I interject to say that what we are thinking of doing, and it might assist everybody in due course, is getting out all of these original prescription sheets for these patients and exhibiting them, so that the Panel will ultimately have them.

THE CHAIRMAN: That might be useful when we ultimately are in camera and discussing. Thank you.

E
 MR JENKINS: If we go to the corresponding nursing entries, and page 394 is the summary, it might be useful if the original of that document can be withdrawn as well. What we have for 20 August '98 is an entry I think by Sharon Ring timed at 12.15.

A Yes.

Q "Condition appears to have deteriorated overnight. Driver charged 10.10" it says.
 A Yes. If that was at night that should have been 22.10 but I do not know if that was morning or night.

F
 Q If we go back to the drug chart, do you still have a finger in the drug chart, 368E?
 A Yes, although this one is not very clear.

Q It says the diamorphine is given at 9.15 at 20 mgs.
 A Yes, 09.15.

G
 Q If you just look to the left, on 19th on the drug chart, at 1600 hours, 20 mg of diamorphine is given and an equivalent quantity of midazolam?
 A Yes.

Q If you go back to page 394, you will see that Shirley Hallman has written those up on 19th, "Pain only relieved for a short period – very anxious. Diamorphine 20 mg, midazolam 20 mg commenced in syringe driver."

H
 A Yes.

- A
- Q If you look at the original document, to your right, of page 394, I think she has written the drugs in in red?
- A Yes.
- Q Is that standard?
- A Yes, it was then for controlled drugs.
- B
- Q Again the Panel can obviously look at this document but the first two lines of that "Pain only relieved for a short period – very anxious" is written in black ink.
- A Yes.
- Q And the next bit, "Diamorphine 20 mg, midazolam 20 mg" is written in red ink?
- A That is right, yes.
- C
- Q What about the words "commenced in syringe driver", is that in red?
- A No, it is in black.
- Q She has signed it in black?
- A Yes.
- D
- Q So Shirley Hallman is the nurse starting this lady on the syringe driver. We know from the prescription sheet that another syringe driver was started on the morning of 20th, and that I suggest is the one which is referred to lower down the page, "Condition appears to have deteriorated overnight. Driver recharged" and she has written "1010". That is all in black I think?
- A Yes.
- E
- Q And the next bit is in red: "Diamorphine 20 mg, midazolam 20 mg, hyoscine 400 mg".
- A That is correct.
- Q Is that all in red?
- A Only the "diamorphine" because that is the controlled drug.
- F
- Q I understand. So "midazolam 20 mg" is written in black?
- A Yes.
- Q "Hyoscine 400 micrograms"?
- A That is in black.
- G
- Q "Family informed of condition" and the rest of Sharon Ring's note in black?
- A Yes.
- Q Then we go to your note, night, as the next entry on this summary?
- A Correct.
- Q Someone has missed out, would that be right, putting in the 40 mgs that we can see from the prescription chart was administered.
- H
- A Yes, it looks like it but I cannot verify that.

- A
- Q I understand. We know that from the entries you have seen it was Shirley Hallman who was increasing the dose because she was the one taking the drugs and signing for them in the drugs book.
- A Yes.
- B
- Q But she has not written down in her summary why that might have happened.
- A That looks like it, yes.
- Q All we have is that the condition appears to have deteriorated overnight and then the dose going up.
- A Yes.
- C
- Q We have another page, page 388, which is part of the nursing care plan and the only entry we have for the 20th is your entry which is the night of 20th over into the 21st.
- A Yes.
- Q No one has written up on this document syringe driver being changed twice: once in the morning of the 20th and again in the afternoon.
- A That seems correct.
- D
- Q What we know is that the dose was increased again to 60mg of diamorphine, the midazolam was increased to 60mg and the hyoscine was increased to 800mcg on the morning of the 21st. You have written that up on your two notes on 388 and 394.
- A Yes.
- Q It is you that signed for it on the prescription chart.
- A Yes, that is correct.
- E
- Q You would have been satisfied that that was an appropriate dose to give.
- A Yes.
- Q But you say you would certainly have discussed it with others.
- A I would have definitely, yes.
- F
- Q Possibly Dr Barton.
- A Not necessarily. It would have been my other colleague or at that time of day it could have been the ward sister because she used to come on duty early but I cannot remember.
- Q But your note at 388 details how Ruby Lake had passed the night.
- A Yes.
- G
- Q "Continued to deteriorate" you have said.
- A Yes.
- Q "Remains very bubbly. Suction attempted without success." What does that mean – "without success"?
- A That the patient was not willing to let me use suction.
- H
- Q How do you do suction?

A A It is a catheter which is attached to a suction machine and you just put it in the patient's mouth to get rid of excess excretion. It could have been that she closed her mouth, did not want me to do it. That is probably what it meant. Some patients obviously do not like this procedure; it is not very nice for them.

Q "Distressed when turned" you have said.

A Yes.

B

Q

"Syringe driver recharged. Oral care given. Catheter draining. Looks flushed."

A That could have been because she was agitated or she could have had a temperature.

C

Q Again, your other note, page 394, at the bottom of the page you have written an identical entry. "General condition continued to deteriorate".

A Yes.

Q "Ruby rousable and distressed when moved".

A Yes.

D

Q Is it right that the patients you were asked about by Mr Kark, although you may not recall them, when you were treating them if you were involved in the administration of drugs you would not have given drugs which you thought were inappropriate.

A That is true, yes.

Q The patient's condition would have been such that you thought the drugs that were being administered by you and other nurses were appropriate.

A Yes.

E

Q You have told us that you left Dryad, although you were still working for the War Memorial but during a refurbishment and you have said that with other doctors opiates and syringe drivers were used but not so often.

A That is true, yes.

F

Q What we have heard was that there were a very limited number of syringe drivers in use in Dryad Ward.

A On Dryad?

Q On Dryad. They have about three syringe drivers on Dryad is what we have been told. Is that right or not?

A I cannot remember to be honest.

G

Q When you say the doses changed, are we talking about the same type of patient?

A Can you repeat that question?

Q When you say the doses changed, you were comparing, when asked questions by Mr Kark, how things had been at the War Memorial Hospital when you had been there and how things were different now that you had moved away from Dryad Ward.

A Yes. I am talking about now. Yes, the prescribing of diamorphine has changed.

H

A Q You have said that patients are given intramuscular injections of diamorphine a few times.
 A They first start off with a subcutaneous injection of diamorphine over a certain period of time and then the clinician might then write up a prescription then for diamorphine but in very minute doses.

B Q Is this a clinician who is working Monday to Friday nine to five?
 A They are what are termed housemen or registrars.

Q They are attached.
 A They are attached to the elderly care unit.

Q Are these the same type of patients that might have been on syringe drivers at Dryad or may they be different?

C A No, they could be the same kind of patients on Dryad.

Q Elderly patients who might have had a hip fracture and been stepped down from ---

A Yes, they could be rehabilitation orthopaedic patients, patients that have had severe strokes and are showing no signs of rehabilitation.

D Q The fact is, and you know this well, do you not, that there was a huge fuss following on a police investigation?

A Yes, I do.

Q Everyone is extremely sensitive about the issues raised by this case?

A Extremely. They are.

E Q Nursing staff as much as any of the doctors.

A Yes, that is true.

MR JENKINS: Thank you very much, Ms Turnbull.

Re-examined by MR KARK

F Q In relation to that last issue, after you moved on the doses became smaller. Were these patients left unnecessarily in pain in your view?

A That is a difficult question. I have to be honest, yes, some could have been.

Q Some could have been?

A Yes. That is a difficult one. Every patient obviously is different. That is a very delicate issue.

G Q You used the expression "very minute doses". Just give us an idea of what you mean in terms of the change from Dryad to what you mean by "very minute doses"?

A As I said, I am not a doctor.

Q I understand that. It is just your understanding of what a very minute dose is.

A 2.5mg to 5mg in 24 hours.

H Q That would be a minute dose.

A A Yes, or no higher than 10mg in 24 hours.

Q The only other thing I wanted to ask you about was you were asked about the explanations that were given to you by the day staff and others about the use of syringe drivers.

A Yes.

B Q I want to understand it. Were you saying, as I think you were to Mr Jenkins, that it was as a result of those explanations to you that you changed your mind about the appropriateness of the use of syringe drivers?

A Yes, I did.

Q After things had been explained to you, you accepted that that was the way that it should be?

C A It was an acceptance, yes.

Q Did the practices actually change or not?

A Can you explain that?

Q You told us all about 1991 and the concerns that were raised. There were various meetings.

D A Yes.

Q You have told us that no document was drawn up, no protocol.

A That is right.

Q You have told Mr Jenkins that explanations were given to you which you accepted ---

E A Yes.

Q --- as to why syringe drivers were being used and why the doses were being used in the way that they were.

A Not necessarily the doses were not really explained.

Q Did the practices themselves change after 1991 as far as you were concerned or was it simply that you accepted what was happening?

F A I think I accepted what was happening.

MR KARK: Thank you.

Questioned by THE PANEL

G THE CHAIRMAN: There are no questions from my colleagues but just a little from me. The first thing I would like to do is to seek your help with bundle G in respect of Patient G, Mr Cunningham. It is a matter of just identifying a signature which you may or may not be able to do. It is page 861 where you will see that there are two entries dated 21/9/98.

A Yes.

H Q It is the second entry which appears to have been made by a member of the night staff on Dryad Ward. I was just wondering whether you recognised the signature on that entry. It is on the line that reads "Peaceful following" and there is a full stop and then a signature.

A A I do not, unfortunately.

MR KARK: I think we have heard that that is Lloyd.

THE CHAIRMAN: It was a question I asked yesterday and we did not have an answer. That is very helpful, Mr Kark.

B In relation to the answers that you have given about the concerns that were raised in 1991, I have to confess, having heard your answers to Mr Jenkins and your answers to Mr Kark, I am still not entirely sure as to what it is that you are saying and I wonder if I can ask you for some help in clarification. In answer to Mr Kark, after he had taken you through the various notes of meetings, I think you said to him that after the meeting we felt we were not getting anywhere. They were banging our heads against a brick wall. You had earlier said that you had been labelled as "troublemakers".

C A Yes.

Q When you said "they were banging our heads ---

MR KARK: "We were banging our heads ..."

THE CHAIRMAN: Was it "we were banging our heads"?

D A Yes.

Q That makes even more sense. When you said, "We were banging our heads against a brick wall" what did you mean by that?

A I think the rest of the people that had their concerns we just were not getting anywhere and that we were sort of making a fuss about nothing and we just felt that people were not listening to us. I think that is what that referred to.

E Q On the face of it they are addressing your issues.

A Yes.

Q They are giving you answers and they are saying to you, for example, in the future if you have any particular questions or queries about particular treatment for a particular patient go and see Nurse Hamblin and your response was well we did not. I think you said the reason for that was that you did not think that she would take any notice of you.

F A Yes.

Q You were referred by Mr Jenkins specifically to a memo signed I Evans. That is in bundle 1, tab 6, page 21. Mr Jenkins drew your attention to the second paragraph which reads:

G "It is not our intention to make this meeting in any way threatening to staff. Our aim is purely to allay any concerns staff may have."

It is a bit of a strange opening to the paragraph. I am trying to understand why somebody would write that. Was it the view among some of the staff that this process was in some way threatening to you?

H A I think it was. It is a long time ago and I was just part of a few staff and I think it was.

A Q Having raised this issue and gone through what was clearly a very painful and difficult process for the members of staff who were involved in raising those complaints you felt that you were banging your heads against the wall, that you were not really being taken seriously, that you were just being given the run around. You have told us that but then you have said that there came a time, however, when you no longer had the concerns that you have indicated you did have at that time.

A That is right.

B Q What I am wondering – this is a question that Mr Kark asked you – is how it was that having come to the end of the process still feeling many of these concerns in place and feeling that you are being given the run around you then find yourself in a position where your concerns have resolved. Is it that as a result of all of these meetings there was a resolution of your concerns because the very things that you had been concerned about ceased to happen or did they continue? Have I made myself clear?

C A Yes, you have. That is a difficult ... I think things did get better afterwards and I think the other nurses that had raised their concern sort of accepted the situation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. That has helped me to resolve a little bit what appeared to be different answers to different barristers and they could not both fit together so thank you very much for that.

D MR JENKINS: Just a couple, sir.

Further cross-examined by MR JENKINS

MR JENKINS: Part of it was that Nurse Giffin did not like Sister Hamblin.

A No, I do not think that was true.

E Q No?

A No, definitely.

Q Was not Sister Hamblin one who was very efficient in the way she ran the ward and required others to be effective and efficient as well?

A That is a difficult question.

F Q Did she not express her views fairly plainly about how much work some of the night staff were doing?

A I do not recall that at all, no.

Q No?

A No, I do not.

G Q And that Nurse Giffin came in for quite a lot of criticism because it was felt that she was not doing very much when she was at work.

A From what I remember of Staff Nurse Giffin she was a good worker.

Q What happened at the meeting, certainly the last one in December, was that you were told by one of the consultants how he wanted his patients dealt with.

A Yes.

H

A Q And was it not clear that what had been happening was that patients had been receiving diamorphine, even though they may not have been in pain.

A Yes.

Q And that was the origin of the concern, the feeling people are getting diamorphine when they are not obviously in pain. And the consultant was then brought in to tell the nurses – or just the night nurses, I suggest – that that is the way it should be, that is the way he wanted it done.

A I think yes, he did.

Q Is that not why your concerns were resolved and not raised again?

A I cannot really remember, but I think probably yes.

Q The more senior nurses and the doctors, particularly the consultant, were explaining things to you that you had not been told before, although you should have been.

A Possibly, yes.

Q And is it not right that you were then given some training in the use of syringe drivers?

A It was very minimal training. I had training by a night sister and we used to attend these workshops at lunchtimes and that was it.

Q It may be that the management should have done a lot more and at a much earlier stage.

A Possibly, yes.

Q But would you agree that some steps were taken by the management after this series of meetings?

A Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark.

Further re-examined by MR KARK

MR KARK: I am stuck on that same groove in the record, I am afraid, and I also want to ask you about the questions that the Chairman asked you. You said two things to him – and again I just made a brief note. You said, “I think things did improve” and you said, “Those who had been complaining accepted the situation.” Those two things may or may not be the same – and I am sorry to pursue this – but accept a situation they may have done, but then Mr Jenkins was asking you about this. I am going to ask you again: did things actually change or was it your understanding that changed?

A I think things ... (After a pause) I think things did change.

Q If they changed can you tell us what the change was?

A I think we did have a better understanding of the use of diamorphine but I think the thing that did not change was still the range of the dosing – that still was written I think in the same way.

Q What about the frequency of the use of syringe drivers? Did that actually change or was it your understanding of why they were being used that changed?

A A I think it was the understanding of the use of them.

MR KARK: Thank you very much indeed.

B THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Turnbull, I am pleased to be able to tell you that that completes your testimony. It has been a long day for you and I want you to know that the Panel really do understand and appreciate the strain that answering questions for such a length of time in this sort of setting puts on any witness and we are most grateful to you for coming to assist us today and for staying the course with us. Thank you very much indeed for your assistance; you are free to leave.

C MR JENKINS: Sir, can I help you with one thing? The question you raised about Mr Cunningham and the note on page 861? I know that a couple of statements were read the other day; there is a third one from a nurse called Lloyd, which I think will refer to that specific entry.

THE CHAIRMAN: I see that; that is one to be read that would have been read earlier, on Day 12, and I was going to raise the question on that but I think we should allow the witness to go first of all.

(The witness withdrew)

D THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, of course at this time the Panel do not know what is in the statement of Ms Lloyd, which is to be read; nor do we know why it is to be read and why Ms Lloyd is not at the moment expected to give evidence in person.

MR KARK: It is being read because it is agreed. I think this one is agreed evidence.

E MR LANGDALE: Yes, it is.

F THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether this will make any difference but you will recall that yesterday there was with a witness some confusion over exactly who had seen what in terms of the unfortunate behaviour of Mr Cunningham shortly before he was put on a syringe driver, and it transpired when the witness had a second chance to look at that page that she recognised that in fact she had not seen any of the things that she reported. And that was why I was keen yesterday to establish who the authority of that note was because as the witness yesterday told us, she would have expected the night staff to report in writing the incident that occurred; it was by no means a run of the mill minor matter, it was the sort of thing that she would have expected to have had recorded. It may be that it would assist the Panel to hear from the persons who did actually witness it, the circumstances in which they came to produce that particular note, which simply read, you will recall, "remained agitated".

G MR KARK: Which is rather more limited. Nurse Lloyd, whose statement is going to be read to you, does not actually deal with it in the sense that she did not witness the behaviour either. That only adds, I expect, to the question mark, rather than clarifies it. I will discuss this with Mr Fitzgerald and with my learned friends but I do not think that we have tracked down the night staff who did witness it.

H

A THE CHAIRMAN: We can only deal with the evidence we have. I was just concerned that if there were a live witness who could shed light on this area and was available to us, that we would take the opportunity to hear from her or indeed him if that were the case.

B MR LANGDALE: Sir, I know that it seems difficult to work out without working out practically what is sensible, but certainly so far as the defence and Dr Barton is concerned we have no objection to my learned friend's team trying to see if they could find out anything more from this potential witness if it can clear this up.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is very helpful, Mr Langdale, if we can make some progress on that.

C MR KARK: In those circumstances we may avoid reading Ms Lloyd just now and we may want to make some inquiries. We will have to find out if she is still alive. We hope she is, of course, but some of our nurses have sadly departed; but we will make inquiries.

There is only one other statement that we were going to read to you and that is the statement of Sharon Ring, but I do not know if the Panel are feeling up to it now, or whether you would like a break.

D MR JENKINS: Can I discourage you from reading it now? I have not checked it.

MR KARK: I can indicate to my learned friend that there is quite a lot of irrelevance that I have taken out but he will need to see it. I am sorry, I had not appreciated that. So I am afraid at the moment that we do not have anything that we can readily read to you.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are due to return on Monday at the normal time with Nurse Tubritt.

E MR KARK: Can I mention one other matter? I have been in discussion with my learned friends today and they know I am going to raise this. We are beginning to be a little bit concerned about the lack of an expert report. The reason for that is that of course Professor Ford is going to be giving evidence, potentially at the back end of next week. I would not want to call Professor Ford before he has had an opportunity of considering the defence expert, if there is one; indeed one of his duties under both the civil and criminal procedure rules would be to consider whether there are areas that he could agree with the defence expert. We are now at a stage where I think that we are beginning to be concerned. The defence know of this and I am really raising a flag, as it were, that I hope this will not cause us problems later on. But we do not want to call Professor Ford before the production of a defence expert report, if there is going to be one.

F THE CHAIRMAN: Are you able to help us in any way, Mr Langdale?

G MR LANGDALE: I suppose the short answer is no. We are aware of the rules; we are aware of the situation, and any material by way of any expert report or expert material will be provided to my learned friend at the appropriate stage, when it is available to be provided. Can I just say this, without sounding too mysterious? I do not think that there is going to be any difficult at all – and I cannot commit myself at the moment – and there is not going to be some sudden new issue that is going to cause Professor Ford to require hours or days or nights burning the midnight oil to grapple with some novel issue.

H

A THE CHAIRMAN: Can I take it then that by the time the professor is likely to be called to give evidence he will have had an opportunity to view the report of the defence?

MR LANGDALE: I feel confident that whatever material we need to supply to my learned friend will be available and I would be astonished if it turns out that Professor Ford says, "My goodness me, I must have some more time to consider this."

B THE CHAIRMAN: I am trying to decode that, Mr Langdale.

MR LANGDALE: There is going to be no radical issue, can I put it like that? And I speak in the absence of anything immediately to hand as far as I am concerned. In an effort to clarify, the GMC have sought the views of a number of experts – indeed, I think it is Dr Black, who might well have been used as the expert and called by the GMC but I understand he had difficulties and could not attend. He, for example, gave evidence at the inquest. There is a range of material which is already there, which makes me feel more confident in saying that I cannot envisage a situation – whatever the differences of view there might be about certain things – that there is going to be any novel difficulty or novel issue which will require Professor Ford to think, "My goodness me, I must have some time."

C THE CHAIRMAN: But Mr Langdale does that mean that by the time Professor Ford is called to give evidence if there is a defence report he will have had that served upon him, or it will have been served upon the GMC.

D MR LANGDALE: Sir, that is what I was endeavouring to say right at the outset. I am quite sure that there will be no difficulty about him seeing in time – in other words before he gives his evidence, and not five minutes before he gives his evidence – any material that we may provide to the other side.

E THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Does that reassure you, Mr Kark?

MR KARK: Not enormously. It is not just novelty that we are interested in, it is any report upon which reliance will be placed. Mr Langdale knows our concerns, so does the Panel and we will see where we get to.

F MR LANGDALE: I am sure my learned friend will not lose any sleep over the weekend about this. I do not think there is going to be any difficulty. We are well aware of what the rules say and we are well aware of what we have to do in terms of this sort of aspect of the case.

THE CHAIRMAN: May I wish you all a good, untroubled weekend and we will resume again at 9.30 on Monday morning.

G (The Panel adjourned until Monday 29 June 2009 at 9.30 a.m.)

H

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL**FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL (SERIOUS PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT)**

Monday 29 June 2009

Code A

Chairman: Mr Andrew Reid, LLB JP

Panel Members: Ms Joy Julien
Mrs Pamela Mansell
Mr William Payne
Dr Roger Smith

Legal Assessor: Mr Francis Chamberlain

CASE OF:

BARTON, Jane Ann

(DAY FIFTEEN)

MR TOM KARK of counsel and MR BEN FITZGERALD of counsel, instructed by Field Fisher Waterhouse, Solicitors, appeared on behalf of the General Medical Council.

MR TIMOTHY LANGDALE QC and MR ALAN JENKINS of counsel, instructed by the Medical Defence Union, appeared on behalf of Dr Barton, who was present.

(Transcript of the shorthand notes of Code A & Co Ltd.

Tel No: Code A

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A THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning everyone. Welcome back. I am very pleased to see that the doctor has been able to join us this morning. I hope that is indicative of things having gone well over the weekend.

MR KARK: I will call Mrs Anita Tubbritt.

ANITA TUBBRITT, Affirmed

B (Following introductions by the Chairman)

Examined by MR KARK

Q I think it is Mrs Tubbritt.

A That is correct.

C Q I want to ask you a little bit about your professional background and then move on to your work at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Are you still a senior staff nurse?

A I am still a senior staff nurse, yes.

Q Where are you working at the moment?

D A I am currently working day duty on Collingwood Ward, which was formerly Dryad Ward.

Q Before we get to your move to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, we need to know a little bit about your training as a nurse. I think you qualified as a registered general nurse in 1986.

A That is correct.

E Q At first I think you went off to work in a place called Beechcroft Manor Rest Home. That is in Gosport as well, is that right?

A That is correct.

Q You left there in about 1987 to take up a post at the GWMH (as we have been calling it).

A Yes.

F Q Did you start off at the Redclyffe Annexe?

A I started at the Redclyffe Annexe, yes.

Q The Redclyffe Annexe in the late 1980s, was that at a site distant from the Gosport War Memorial Hospital?

A Yes.

G Q What sort of patients did you look after there?

A Elderly patients. Continuing care.

Q Does that really mean that they were long-term patients?

A Yes.

H Q Did you work different shifts, but mostly at night?

- A A I only worked night shifts at the time.
- Q The Redclyffe Annexe, I think as you have told us, was a geriatric ward. Were there any other wards at the Redclyffe Annexe, or was it purely for geriatric patients?
- A It was just the one ward.
- B Q Did you have patients there who were in for palliative care?
- A Yes.
- Q You did.
- A Yes, from as far as I can remember.
- Q Did you have a number of patients there who remained there for a very long time?
- A Yes.
- C Q Tell us about the position, so far as doctoring at the Redclyffe Annexe, prior to Dr Jane Barton arriving. What was the system prior to the time when you had a clinical assistant?
- A Prior to Dr Barton arriving, as far as I can remember, if we needed medical cover of any sort we contacted the patient's own GP.
- D Q They would then have to come out to the ward, would they?
- A They would come to the ward and they would deal with whatever problems arose.
- Q Would that include prescribing?
- A Yes.
- E Q Dealing with pain relief, can you remember in general what sort of pain relief was used on the Redclyffe Annexe prior to Dr Barton arriving? Were you dealing with a whole range or what was the position?
- A A whole range. From as far as I can remember, it was a whole range.
- Q Meaning what?
- A Non opioids, mild opioids, right the way through.
- F Q Prior to Dr Barton arriving, did you ever deal with syringe drivers?
- A I think once. I can recall using a syringe driver once, initially, after I had started working at Redclyffe. I am not sure if it was before Dr Barton arrived or not.
- Q All right. Once Dr Barton had started working at the Redclyffe Annexe, can you help us as to whether any changes appeared to be made about the running of the ward?
- A Things were more organised. Drug charts were written up. We had someone to call upon during the day. Prescriptions were written so that needs were anticipated.
- G Q What does that mean "prescriptions were written so that needs were anticipated"?
- A PRN night sedation. PRN analgesia.
- Q Is that something you had had before on the ward?
- A Not that I can recall.
- H

A Q Tell us about the use of syringe drivers. Did that remain the same as it was before, or did it change?

A The use of syringe drivers I think increased.

Q Tell us about that increase, please. How do you remember it happening?

A I am not exactly sure. They seemed to arrive and then we used syringe drivers on a fairly regular basis.

B

Q Of course a number of different drugs can be used in syringe drivers, as we know. What is your recollection of why syringe drivers were being introduced and what they were being used for?

A From what I can remember, if patients were unable to swallow, we administered their medication through a syringe driver.

C

Q What about the use of opiates. Did that remain the same or did that change?

A I think it changed.

Q In what direction did it change?

A We tended to use opiates through the syringe drivers more.

D

Q Tell us about your dealings with Dr Barton. You were working on nights.

A Yes.

Q What time did that mean?

A I started my shift at quarter-past eight in the evening and finished at quarter-to eight in the morning. Dr Barton used to arrive on the ward somewhere just after half-past seven in the morning, so there would be a 15 minute overlap, and she would ask us if we had any concerns about the patients.

E

Q Did that mean you had direct meetings with Dr Barton?

A Yes, but not always.

Q Who, so far as you were concerned, was the main point of contact within the nursing staff for Dr Barton?

A Our ward manager.

F

Q Who was that?

A Gill Hamblin.

Q So which ward were you once you -----

A Dryad Ward.

G

Q Let us go back a little bit. Did you deal with Gill Hamblin back at Redclyffe?

A Yes, I did.

Q Once you moved to the new hospital, you moved to Dryad Ward.

A Yes, that is correct.

H

A Q Still dealing with the Redclyffe Annexe for the moment, before you had moved, does the evidence that you have just given reflect the position there, that you were on nights and you would meet Dr Barton occasionally in the mornings?

A At Redclyffe Annexe we did not see Dr Barton quite as much as we did at the new hospital.

B Q But Gill Hamblin was there.

A Gill Hamblin was there.

Q And Dr Barton was there.

A Yes.

C Q Then when things changed and you moved to the new ward, to Dryad Ward, tell us about your workings there with Gill Hamblin and Dr Barton. How much interaction did you have with Gill Hamblin?

A It would be at handover times, so either first thing in the morning, or if she was on a late shift she would handover to us in the evening, or possibly by telephone call.

Q Possibly by telephone call?

A Yes.

D Q How would that work?

A If she needed to ask us something, she would phone us at home. But that was very rare.

Q Are we talking about Gill Hamblin?

A Gill Hamblin, yes.

E Q So if she needed to ask you something – presumably about a particular patient.

A Yes.

Q Tell us about the type of patient you had, once the move took place. You have described the patients at the Redclyffe Annexe. Was there any difference once you got to Dryad Ward?

F A Initially there were similar types of patients, but during the course of the time of Dryad Ward, patients changed from continuing care, palliative care, rehabilitation of fractured hip patients.

Q I am sorry, the last ----

A Rehabilitation of patients with fractured hips.

G Q Were those patients who required greater care, or greater intervention, as it were?

A Yes.

Q I want to go back to the time just prior to the move.

A Okay.

H Q Do you remember that when you were still at the Redclyffe Annexe there had been concerns raised about the use of syringe drivers and about the opiates that were being used?

A Yes.

A
Q Were you very much a part of those meetings and the concerns being raised?
A Yes.

Q Did you have concerns yourself?
A I did have concerns myself.

B
Q We will have a look at some documentation in a moment, but do you remember the essence of your concerns?
A I can remember being concerned about how syringe drivers were being used, the amount of training we had received prior to the arrival of the syringe drivers, and training in general.

C
Q I am going to ask you to take up a bundle marked Panel Bundle 1 and turn to tab 6. Just so that you know, I am not ignoring parts of this. The Panel have already heard evidence from a number of witnesses and we have already looked at some of this documentation, so I am not going to go through it all again.
A Right.

D
Q I am going to draw your attention to certain aspects where I think you were specifically closely involved. Looking at page 2 for the moment, do you have a document entitled "Summary of meeting held at Redclyffe Annexe 11 July 1991".
A Yes.

E
Q I think you see your name in the right-hand column of the nurses that attended. Just casting your eye over the list of concerns, we have been through this and so I want to try to avoid going through it again – we can see that the concerns revolved around, first of all, the amount of the use of the diamorphine; the lack of the use of the sliding scale – which I will ask you about; the possibility that patient deaths were being hastened unnecessarily; lack of training; and too high a degree of unresponsiveness. It as all those sorts of areas that were being raised.
A Yes.

F
Q Did you share those concerns?
A I think I did at the time.

Q What sort of training had you had, first of all, in the use of syringe drivers, and what sort of training did you get in the use of syringe drivers?
A Prior to this meeting?

G
Q Yes.
A When I had come across the very first syringe driver during my time at Redclyffe Annexe, I explained to the ward manager at the time, Sister [Code A] and she said, "Surely you've come across a syringe driver before." I said, "No, I don't recall using one." So she took me to the patient and said, "It's a pump with a syringe. You won't need to touch it, there's nothing to worry about." That was the extent of my initial training.

H
Q Did you ever have to load at that time, after that sort of training, a syringe driver yourself?
A No.

A

Q Did you ever receive more formal training on the use of syringe driver?
A I do not think I did prior to this meeting.

Q Let us just fast forward a moment. Did you subsequently receive training on the use of a syringe driver?
A Yes.

B

Q What sort of training did you receive?
A The first training I can recall having shortly after the meeting was, I think, a one hour session with a community nurse used to dealing with syringe drivers.

Q And that training consisted of what?
A I think I can recall she brought a syringe driver with her and talked through how to set it up and the purpose of it – as much as you can in one hour.

C

Q And how many of you were there – can you remember?
A No, I cannot offhand.

Q But more than just you?
A More than just me, yes.

D

Q So it was really a demonstration of the use of a syringe driver?
A Yes, yes.

Q What other training did you have?
A I cannot remember offhand.

E

Q What about the use of opiates, the use of the drugs that went into the syringe driver. Did you have any specific training about those?
A I cannot remember any specific training as such, but a number of us took it upon ourselves to do as much research as we could.

Q I think you specifically did some research about syringe drivers?
A I did.

F

Q We will come onto that. Can I take you, please, to page 6 of this little bundle. You will find the page number in the right hand corner. This is after the meeting in July. We are now into the end of October 1991. We can see the purpose of this visit by Code A
Code A community tutor:

G

“The visit was in response to a request by Staff Nurse Anita Tubbritt to discuss the issue of anomalies in the administration of drugs.”

Do you recall this meeting?
A Yes, I can.

Q What was this all about?
A At the time, I was attending a Care of the Elderly ENB course. As part of that course we had to discuss problems in our work area or things that bothered us. I chose to discuss

H

A pain control. It was a result of this discussion. Apparently a previous member of staff had attended a similar course and had raised similar concerns.

Q And the person who is coming along to give this talk, was that Code A?

A Yes.

B Q I can see that she described as Community Tutor?

A Yes.

Q Can you help us with what that actually means?

A Her involvement with me was as a tutor at the School of Nursing. She actually participated in the Care of the Elderly ENB course.

C Q Which you were doing?

A Yes.

Q I see. So she came along, did she, to speak to the nursing staff that we can see at the Redclyffe Annexe?

A Yes.

D Q Was that as a result of your request?

A My request and, as I stated, the outcome of a previous discussion.

Q Okay. And then we can see that some problems were identified at the day of the meeting. These were nurses, were they, speaking out?

A Yes.

E Q About the problems that they had seen?

A Yes.

Q Were there any members of management at this meeting?

A No.

Q Or Dr Barton or Sister Hamblin?

A No.

F Q So it is nurses together as it were with the Nurse Tutor?

A Yes. The purpose of the meeting was really to find out what our concerns were and whether there really was a problem.

Q Then we can see the two first matters were raised by Staff Nurse Giffin?

A Yes.

G Q Then you reported an occasion when a syringe driver had run out before the prescribed time.

“The staff are concerned that diamorphine is being prescribed indiscriminately without alternative analgesia, night sedation or tranquillisers being considered or prescribed.”

H

- A Was that at the time a concern that you shared?
A Yes.
- Q We have heard quite a lot, as you will appreciate, in this case about the sliding case of analgesia?
A Certainly.
- B Q Did you know about the sliding scale of analgesia, the concept of it?
A Yes.
- Q There is a specific document called the Wessex Protocol. Had you heard of the Wessex Protocol?
A Probably not at the time, but yes, I am aware of it.
- C Q But you knew the concept of starting at the bottom and moving upwards?
A Yes.
- Q Then at paragraph 5 we can see a specific concern raised by you:
"Nurse Tubbritt reported that a female patient of 92 years awaiting discharge had i.m."
- D Is that "intramuscularly"?
A Yes.
- Q "... 10 mg Diamorphine at 10.40 hours on 20.9.91, and a further i.m. 10 mg Diamorphine at 13.00 hours on 20.9.91, administered for either a manual evacuation of faeces or an enema."
- E And the use of diamorphine concerned you on that occasion?
A Yes.
- Q Over the page:
"There are a number of other incidents which are causing the staff concern but photograph the purposes of this report are too many to mention. The staff are willing to discuss these incidents."
- Then you were obviously speaking up a bit at this meeting. That is no criticism.
A I think people expressed their concerns. Then, when it was a more formal meeting, as you can appreciate, people go quiet and because I knew [Code A] it was left to me to do the speaking.
- G Q It is a bit like asking if there are any questions at the end of a lecture.
A Yes.
- Q It is quite difficult to do it, but you knew Ms [Code A]
A Yes.
- H

A Q And so you felt it easier. Let us have a look at what you raised.

"7. It was reported by Staff Nurse Tubbritt that:"

And then you reported the quantities that were being used between certain dates. Then at (b) you said:

B "b) (24 of the 57 ampoules of Diamorphine 30 mg were administered to one patient, who had no obvious pain...".

Why, so far as you were concerned, was the lack of pain relevant?

A I think I wondered why they were having diamorphine if they did not have pain, or did not appear to have pain.

C Q Then:

"c) 8 ampoules of Diamorphine ... were used between [certain dates] (4 of the 8 ... were administered to the patient identified in 7b above ...

Note – This patient had previously been prescribed Oramorph 10 mg ... which was administered regularly commencing on 2 July 1991.

D The staff cannot understand why the patient was prescribed Oramorph and Diamorphine.

When the staff questioned the prescription with Sister...".

Would that be Sister Hamblin?

E A Yes.

Q "... they were informed that the pain had pain. The staff recalled having asked the patient on numerous occasions if he had pain, his normal reply was no."

F A That is right.

Q Do you remember this incident?

A Yes, now I have read it.

Q It is a long time ago?

A Yes.

G Q Can you just tell us – what was Sister Hamblin's reaction generally if you confronted her or asked her about why patients were on diamorphine?

A At the time the relationship between nights and days what not necessarily at its best. On night staff, there were a few members of staff that had been around for a long, long time and a great deal of new staff, and we did not really know Gill Hamblin very well, so it was building up a rapport, I suppose.

H

A Q Did you yourself have occasions of speaking to Sister Hamblin which you can recall and indicating your concerns directly to her?

A I think yes.

Q And do you have a recollection of the sort of reaction that you got back from her?

A I do not think it was the reaction I expected. I do not think it was a very helpful reaction.

B

Q Then we can see the conclusions where you were concerned about the use of diamorphine indiscriminately and that non-opioids and weaker opioids were not being considered prior to the use of diamorphine. The sliding scale of analgesia comes into play there, does it?

A Yes.

C

Q I am going to miss out a couple of documents. There is a letter from [Code A] at page 10 to Mrs Evans. Mrs Evans, we know, was the patient care manager. I think [Code A] [Code A] was raising your concerns directly with management. I am sorry – back into tab 6, page 10. That is a letter we have looked at. Did you understand [Code A] was raising your concerns with management?

A Yes.

D

Q I will not ask you any more about that. Could I ask you to go to page 14, please – same tab. Here is another letter from a nurse representative – somebody called Keith Murray. Did you know Keith Murray?

A Yes.

Q He is described as a “Branch Convenor”?

A Yes.

E

Q In essence, was he representing the nurses ---

A He was, yes.

Q --- in this exchange. This had now gone up to the District General Manager, Mr [Code A] This is a letter dated 2 December 1991. Would you look at the second paragraph? He writes:

F

“I was contacted by a staff nurse currently employed on night duty in Redclyffe Annexe, her concern was that patients within Redclyffe were being prescribed Diamorphine who she felt did not always require it, the outcome being that the patient died. The drug was always being administered via ‘syringe drivers’. It is fair to say that this member of staff was speaking on behalf of a group of her colleagues.”

G

Do you have a recollection as to who that member of staff was?

A I believe it was Sylvia Giffin, Staff Nurse Giffin.

Q Again, did you share that concern?

A Yes.

H

A Q Page 16, please. This note refers to a letter from you referring to the meeting that had taken place on 31 October which we have looked at at page 6. Isobel Evans is your local manager, the hospital manager. Is that right?

A Yes.

B Q
"May I take this opportunity to once more state that I am happy to discuss any areas of concern that staff may have, in fact I would welcome open discussion, as I feel the only alternative is disruptive criticism which achieves nothing positive and leaves staff feeling frustrated."

Did you have any face to face dealings with Isobel Evans?

A Yes, I did.

C Q Was she trying to assist, did you feel?

A I did not think she was at the time, no.

Q Why not?

A I can remember one incident. At the time of these meetings, my mother was dying of a brain tumour, which I felt was totally unrelated, but she brought that up and she stated that perhaps my judgments were clouded by my own personal problems.

D Q Was your mother on a syringe driver?

A Not at the time, no.

Q Was she receiving opiates?

A Yes. She did later go on to a syringe driver.

E Q And it was being suggested that because of that background, as it were ---

A Yes.

Q --- you had these particular concerns?

A Yes.

F Q Page 18. I am sorry – that is actually a letter not to yourself but to Beverley Turnbull, but there is reference there to a policy being written up. Was a policy ever written up that you can recall?

A I cannot recall a policy, no.

G Q Can we go to page 21, please. Another meeting, I think, was set up and you had been sent a memo. The memo is back on page 17, and I am going to try and short-circuit things. You were being invited, I think, by that memo to put your views down in writing. Then, if we go to page 21 we can see that Ms Evans is writing:

"Due to the lack of response to my memo ... Dr Logan will be unable to comment on specific cases, however, we have arranged a meeting for all members of staff at Redclyffe who have concerns on the prescribing of Diamorphine on ... 17th December ... to discuss the subject in general terms.

H

A It is not our intention to make this meeting in any way threatening to staff, our aim is purely to allay any concerns staff may have so I hope everyone will take the opportunity to attend and help resolve this issue."

Then we have the note of the meeting at page 23. By this stage had you expressed such concerns as you could to management?

A Relating to the memo?

B

Q Yes.

A I honestly cannot remember.

Q Just before we come onto this, we are going to see that Dr Barton attended this specific meeting on 17 December. How much discussion, if any, up until this point had you actually had with Dr Barton?

C

A I cannot recall having any discussion with Dr Barton prior to this meeting.

Q May I ask why not? She was coming in. These concerns had started, or at least had been written about, in July 1991. We are now in December 1991. Was there any reason you did not raise them with Dr Barton?

A I think because we did not actually come into contact with her, or very rarely up until that point. Our point of contact would have been Gill Hamblin or the day nurse in charge?

D

Q So you were dealing with Gill Hamblin?

A Yes.

Q You described her attitude. Page 23, we can see that you were present at this meeting on 17 December. Let us go down to paragraph 3. We can see that staff were invited to give details –

E

"... of cases they had been concerned over but no information was received; it was therefore decided to talk to staff on the general issue of symptom control..."

I am not going to read through the whole of this. You are welcome to cast your eye over it if you wish to. Page 24 we can see that Mrs Evans had presented staff's concerns so that at this stage, Mrs Evans was apparently putting forward the concerns the nurses had, and then there is a set of propositions, one to five. Just look through those.

F

A Yes.

Q The Panel have read them through already, and they have had them read through for them, including (4):

G

"4. What is questioned is the appropriateness of prescribing diamorphine for other symptoms or less obvious pain.

5. No one was questioning the amounts of diamorphine or suggesting that doses were inappropriate.

All present agreed with these statements, no other comments were asked to be considered."

H

- A At this stage did you still have any concerns about the use of diamorphine and syringe drivers?
 A I think one of my main concerns was how staff were actually using the syringe drivers, changing the rates and things.
- Q What was that? Can you just explain that a little more?
 A I can recall several incidents where the practice was to initiate the syringe driver, start the rate higher than necessary for a few hours, then to reduce the rate.
- B
- Q Did you ever get a written protocol following all those meetings?
 A I cannot recall receiving one, no.
- Q How did things move on after December 1991? Did you receive further training?
 A I attended lots of training courses. I think anything that was available, I attended.
- C
- Q Was that of your own volition or was that something arranged by GWMH?
 A It was mostly off my own bat.
- Q Because you wanted to know more?
 A Yes.
- D
- Q Did you receive any formal training about the use of opiates and the quantities of opiates to use?
 A Through Gosport War Memorial Hospital?
- Q Yes.
 A I cannot recall off-hand.
- E
- Q Did you go on any training courses yourself?
 A I think I did, yes.
- Q Can you recall whether you had any specific further discussion or training either with Sister Hamblin or Dr Barton?
 A No.
- F
- Q You moved, as you have told us, about a year after this to the Dryad ward.
 A Yes.
- Q Can you help us? Did things change at the Dryad ward, or did your concerns resolve themselves?
 A I am not sure if I can say things resolved themselves. I think my understanding was different. By that point I had attended a lot of training sessions and done a lot of reading and research.
- G
- Q So you knew more about the use of diamorphine and more about the use of syringe drivers?
 A I think so, yes.
- H
- Q Did your concerns about their use resolve themselves?
 A I cannot recall being as concerned.

A

Q Can you tell the Panel this? Did things actually change after these meetings so far as you are concerned, or was it your understanding that changed?

A I think mostly my understanding.

Q Did anything change about the actual use of syringe drivers and the use of diamorphine that you can remember?

B

A The use of syringe drivers possibly changed slightly, certainly at night. Once we were aware of certain protocols and guidelines, we tended to stick to those, recording on charts, regular checks, that type of thing, but this was on a more informal basis.

Q So the record keeping got better, did it?

A Yes.

C

Q Anything else?

A Not that I can remember.

Q What about the quantities of opiates being used or how quickly they were being used? Did that change or did that remain the same?

A I think it was about the same.

D

Q So far as the use of opiates is concerned on Dryad ward, you have had your training, such as it is, you have had the meetings, you have moved to Dryad ward. I just want to ask you a little bit about the authority for the use of a syringe driver, the authority for an increase in medication. We have seen through the notes – perhaps I do not need to take you to a specific note, because I expect you will remember – that Dr Barton used to pre-prescribe; she used to prescribe a variable dose.

A Yes.

E

Q Do you recall that happening?

A I can recall that happening, yes.

Q There were variable doses of diamorphine to be administered through a syringe driver.

A Yes.

F

Q As a member of the night staff, were you ever responsible yourself for setting up a syringe driver, initiating a syringe driver?

A Very rarely.

Q But it did happen?

A Possibly occasionally. I cannot actually recall setting one up.

G

Q If you had done, that would presumably be with another nurse?

A Yes.

Q Whether you actually set one up or not, can you remember what your understanding was about the authority to set one up? Would you need to go back to the doctor, or would you be able to set one up if it was prescribed?

H

A Once it was prescribed, if we found it necessary, then we could set it up.

- A
- Q The initiation dose would be what to your understanding?
A The lowest dose from the prescription chart.
- Q Increases in doses would be dealt with how so far as you were concerned? First of all, did you ever deal with an increase in dose yourself?
A Probably, yes.
- B
- Q We will be looking in a moment at some patient notes. Again, so far as you are concerned, what was your understanding of how doses should be increased?
A We had the authority, if the patient we felt was still in pain or discomfort, the prescription was such that we could adjust the dose if we felt it was necessary.
- C
- Q If you felt it was necessary?
A Yes.
- Q But by how much? If you have a range, say, from 20 to 200, you started off at 20 and you felt that the patient required it, by how much would you feel you would be entitled to increase the dose?
A 5 or 10 mg.
- D
- Q 5 or 10 mg?
A I think so.
- Q Would you go back to a doctor before increasing it, or not?
A Sometimes.
- E
- Q But not always?
A Not always, no.
- Q You were interviewed by the police, were you not?
A Yes.
- Q And you gave a number of statements also to the police.
A Yes.
- F
- Q You said I think all the way through those that you yourself would not give drugs to a patient unless you thought it was appropriate.
A Yes, that is correct.
- Q That is part of your duty as a nurse.
A Yes.
- G
- Q Can I ask you what you know about conversion rates from oral morphine to subcut diamorphine, or what you knew then?
A I know that the dose of the subcut would have been less than the oral.
- Q Do you know how much the dose has to be less to be the equivalent?
A About a third.
- H

- A Q Is that knowledge that you had back in the mid to late 1990s?
A That I am not sure.
- Q So that may or may not have been part of the special training that you did?
A Exactly.
- B Q I want to go on, before we begin looking at specific patients, to ask you about two other areas. The first is the issue of hydration of patients. Again, we have heard lots of evidence about hydration and the use of syringe drivers, but what was your knowledge about its use on Dryad ward? Did you use hydration on Dryad ward?
A Very rarely.
- Q What sort of method of hydration would you use on Dryad ward?
A If a patient was unable to drink orally, on very rare occasions it would be subcutaneous fluids.
- C Q So not intravenous?
A No.
- Q Subcutaneous?
A Subcutaneous.
- D Q Which means, as we have heard, a low level drip.
A Yes.
- Q In what circumstances would you yourself have thought it appropriate to use a subcutaneous drip? Would that have to be prescribed by a doctor or would you be able to set it up on your own?
E A I think in those days it would have been on a doctor's recommendation.
- Q So there would have to be a note made that a subcutaneous drip should be set up?
A Yes, from what I can recall.
- Q But then you would be able to do that?
A Yes.
- F Q That would involve, we have heard, inserting a small needle into the patient's skin and allowing a slow drip of what? Saline?
A Yes.
- Q If a patient was unable to swallow, might that be an indication for a syringe driver to be used?
G A Yes.
- Q You have said I think that it would be very rare for hydration to be used, but it was sometimes used, was it, in relation to patients who were on a syringe driver?
A I am pretty certain that I can recall a couple of cases, yes.
- H Q I want to ask you about some other occasional notes that we have seen and your understanding of them. We have seen in some of the notes – not actually from Dryad ward,

- A but from the Haslar Hospital I think it was – “Not for resuscitation”, or “Not for 555”.
Would you understand what those words mean?
A Yes.
- Q “Not for resuscitation” perhaps is fairly obvious.
A Yes.
- B Q We have also seen expressions such as “Make comfortable” or “TLC”.
A Yes.
- Q Let us deal with TLC first of all. TLC would mean what to you?
A Tender loving care.
- Q What significance would that have for a patient?
A To keep the patient comfortable.
- C Q Would it be any indication of what sort of state of illness they were in?
A I would assume the patient was probably terminally ill by that point.
- Q So effectively for palliative care.
A Yes.
- D Q “Happy for nursing staff to confirm death”. What, if anything, does that mean to you?
A That the patient was terminally ill and, if they died, nursing staff were able to confirm death.
- Q So that would be its significance to you; it would indicate that the patient was terminally ill.
A Yes.
- E Q I am sorry. I began by asking you about “Make comfortable” and I forgot to come back to it. “Make comfortable”. What would that signify to you?
A Similar to TLC, I think.
- Q So “TLC”, “Make comfortable”, “Happy for nursing staff to confirm death”, in your mind at least were end of life type words?
A Yes.
- F Q Was there any other notation to indicate to you that a patient was for palliative care and would it ever be written in the notes that you saw “For palliative care only” or whatever might be written?
A Possibly “For palliative care”.
- G Q Do you remember that ever being written?
A I have seen it written, but I cannot recall if it was then or if it has been in more recent years.
- Q When the police investigation started, I suspect that word of that raced round the nursing environment fairly fast, did it?
A Yes.
- H

A

Q You handed your notes about what had gone on in 1991 to somebody called Tony Scammel.

A Yes.

Q Just tell us, please, why you did that?

B

A It was as a result of a comment in the CHAI report. It stated that nobody had ever questioned pain control within Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Q You were concerned about that because?

A A number of staff were concerned, so I felt it was appropriate to take my notes to Tony Scammel.

C

Q I am going to start dealing with various patients. We can deal before we break I think with Patient E, Gladys Richards, very quickly. You were interviewed by the police in 2000 about this lady. I am not going to invite anybody to turn up the notes of this patient, because I think your dealings with this patient were extremely limited.

A Yes.

Q In fact, I think according to your interview, you had almost no dealings with her until she died.

D

A That is correct.

Q Then you were asked to hand a note or a book of some sort to one of the relatives?

A A book, yes, from a relative to a colleague.

Q I may have to come back to Patient E, but for the moment I am going to move on. I think you went through Patient E's notes, did you not, with the police and you did not find any notations.

E

A No.

MR KARK: I am going to move on to Ruby Lake, who is our Patient F. I do not know, sir, when you want to take our break. This patient will probably take about 10 or 15 minutes, so it might be convenient to have the break now.

F

THE CHAIRMAN: Very well. We are going to take our break now. The Panel assistant will take you to somewhere where you can get some refreshments. You are on oath – and I will probably remind you of this later – and your oath continues every time we take a break and so it is absolutely essential that you do not talk to anybody about any aspect of this case. Is that clear to you?

A Yes.

G

THE CHAIRMAN: We will return, ladies and gentlemen, at 10.45.

(The Panel adjourned for a short time)

THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back everyone.

H

MR KARK: Sir, I do not know if we are waiting for the doctor. She is not here.

A THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, there is such a rampart of files, that we cannot see from this end.

MR LANGDALE: She is not here at the moment, but perhaps we may just continue. She will be here.

B MR KARK: Mrs Tubbritt, we were about to turn to Ruby Lake, Patient F. I think, with one exception, it is fair to say that you do not have an individual recollection of these patients.

A No.

Q So far as Ruby Lake is concerned, she is one of those about whom, unfortunately, you have no recollection.

A That is correct.

C Q That is no criticism of you; it is all a very long time ago. I only want to ask you very briefly about some entries in her records. Could I ask you to take up bundle F, page 78 – and the page numbers that we are looking for are those with two short lines either side of them. This is not your note at all, but it shows us that this patient was transferred to Dryad Ward – that was your ward ----

A Yes.

D Q -- for continuing care. Do you know what the "HPC" notation means?

A I am not sure, no.

Q I am sorry, it is "history of presenting complaint," it is not?

A Yes.

E Q Then fracture ...

A Neck of femur.

Q Thank you. We can see that she had a Barthel of 6. "Get to know. Gentle rehabilitation. I am happy for nursing staff to confirm death" – which you have indicated to us was an indication of palliative care. A Barthel of 6. We know there is a maximum of 20, but is a Barthel of 6, on Dryad Ward, good, bad or average?

A Average, I would think.

F Q It means she can do some things for herself, with assistance.

A Yes.

Q She is not totally in the hands of the staff.

A That is correct.

G Q Can we turn to the prescription charts, please, which you will find starting at page 368A. We can see that she has been written up, at page 368B, for Oramorph 10 milligrams and temazepam, and various other drugs at page 368C. At page 368E, she has been written up, under the daily review prescriptions, for diamorphine 20-200 milligrams. Do you see that?

A Yes.

H Q How do you interpret that prescription?

- A A That we could adjust the dose between 20 and 200 milligrams.
- Q Depending on what?
- A Depending on the patient's need for pain control – if we felt the patient was in discomfort.
- B Q Would you regard that as a PRN prescription?
- A Yes.
- Q Meaning “as required”.
- A As required, yes.
- Q But it is written up in the daily review prescriptions.
- A Yes.
- C Q But you would not automatically give that?
- A That drug or the dose?
- Q You can see: “Diamorphine 20-200 mgs.” Who would have written the dates at the top: 19, 20, 21, 22?
- A The person who administered the drug.
- D Q And they would be administering it on the basis, would they, of their decision about the patient's need?
- A Yes.
- Q Would this sort of prescription normally be under a “PRN” heading?
- A Yes.
- E Q You have told us, quite rightly, that you would not issue a drug unless you thought it was appropriate.
- A That is correct.
- Q Before issuing a drug, would you look at the Haslar notes necessarily, or would you be reacting to the patient at that moment?
- F A Probably reacting to the patient at that moment in time.
- Q I think you were shown a controlled drugs record, but I am going to ask you about one of these entries here. On page 368E, do you see your initials anywhere? We can give you the original, if that helps you. (Original handed to the witness) You can look at the original controlled drug record if you need to, but in your police statement you reveal that 60 milligrams was withdrawn on 21 August at 7.35, and the entry was witnessed by yourself and it was given by Nurse Turnbull.
- G A That is correct.
- Q I do not suppose you have any independent recollection of that at the moment.
- A No.
- H Q All right. When we look at 21 August, where we see “07.35” that is 60 milligrams being given with you being present.

- A A Correct.
- Q But it has not been initialled by you.
- A No.
- Q I do not think your initial appears elsewhere on this page, does it?
- A No.
- B Q Can you tell us, so far as you are concerned, how this would have worked. Who would have made the decision to increase this patient's prescription by 20 milligrams?
- A It would have been a joint decision between myself and Nurse Turnbull.
- Q And you would be entitled to do that because of what?
- A Because we have the leeway in the prescription and we were caring for the patient.
- C Q You told us earlier that your recollection was that any increases would normally be between five and ten milligrams.
- A Yes.
- Q This is an increase of half again, as it were.
- A Twenty.
- D Q From 40 to 60 milligrams.
- A Yes.
- Q Can you recall anything about the basis for it?
- A No, I cannot. I am sorry.
- E Q There is a nursing note at page 394 which you might like to go to. If you would look towards the bottom of the page, I do not think the first writing is yours, is it?
- A No.
- Q 20 August 1998. This is the day before that drug that you have issued. "Condition appears to have deteriorated overnight. Driver recharged ..." You would have had nothing to do with the initiation of the driver.
- F A No.
- Q Nor the starting dose.
- A No.
- Q And you cannot tell us why it was initiated.
- A Only making assumptions from the records in front of me.
- G Q Diamorphine, we can see 20 milligrams is where it started off, and midazolam 20 milligrams. Then, towards the bottom of the page, do we see "Night"?
- A Yes.
- Q "General condition continued to deteriorate. Very "bubbly". Suction attempted without success. Position changed frequently ..." Can you read this for us?
- H A "Only rousable ..."

- A
- Q It has been suggested that is "Ruby rousable ..."
 A "Ruby rousable and distressed when moved. Syringe driver recharged. Diamorphine 60mgs. Midazolam 60 mgs. Hyoscine 800mcg ... Daughter has inquired 08:00 [something] condition".
- B
- Q Whose signature is that?
 A Staff Nurse Turnbull's.
- Q She was present with you, you have told us.
 A Yes.
- Q At the withdrawal of the drugs. When we see on the page before, "General condition continues to deteriorate" this is a patient who is on a syringe driver, and there is no note, I do not think, that the patient is being hydrated.
 A No.
- C
- Q She has been on the syringe driver, as we can see, from 19 August. When you describe that a patient's condition is deteriorating, it may be obvious to you but what does it mean?
 A The patient's breathing, perhaps, might have deteriorated. They appear uncomfortable, distressed. Their physical condition and observations would have changed.
- D
- Q Their physical condition would have changed.
 A Yes.
- Q In what way? What would you be looking for?
 A Signs of distress and pain.
- E
- Q Right.
 A Agitation.
- Q If there is pain, would you make a note of it normally?
 A Usually, yes.
- F
- Q "Condition deteriorating" means what? All of those things? Some of those things?
 A I think all of those things.
- Q If pain is the basis for you increasing a dose, is that something that you would note or you would not normally note?
 A I think I would normally note.
- G
- Q I am going to ask you to put that file away, please. There is almost no need for you to turn it up, but so far as Patient G is concerned, Arthur Cunningham, who was known as Brian, I think you have signed a note, just to have a very quick look at it, at page 647, and that relates to the patient dying on 26 September.
 A Yes.
- H
- Q These are clinical notes. You would only put a note into these notes presumably if the patient was dead.

- A A Usually, yes.
- Q Because they do not form part of the nursing record.
- A No, that is correct.
- Q We can see previously that the patient had been transferred to Dryad Ward on 21 September. We see the words, "Make comfortable. Give adequate analgesia. I am happy for nursing staff to confirm death." How would you read those three comments?
- B A I would assume that the patient was still in a very poorly state.
- Q Presumably, it was as a result of those words, "I am happy for nursing staff to confirm death," that you, together with Nurse Turnbull, were able to do what you did.
- A Yes, that is correct.
- C Q If you could have a very quick look at page 758, please, I want to make sure that we have not missed anything. I do not think that you have initialled any of these.
- A No.
- Q Okay. You can put bundle G away, please. I want to turn to Mrs Enid Spurgin, our Patient I. At page 164 we can find a drug sheet. You are about to be handed the original drug chart. (Original handed to the witness) This patient had been transferred to Dryad Ward on 26 March 1999. We can see at the top of this page that she was prescribed Oramorph. There are four separate prescriptions for Oramorph on this page, but we can see that the first date at the very top is 26 March – yes?
- D A Yes.
- Q I do not think that you can recall this patient specifically, is that right?
- E A No, I cannot remember her. I am sorry.
- Q I think you have initialled an entry for the administration of Oramorph at 2200 hours. In the second row up from the bottom, do you see Oramorph has been written up? Is that ten milligrams.
- A Ten milligrams in five millilitres.
- Q 2200 hours would have been written by whom?
- F A That is a member of the ward staff's handwriting.
- Q That is...?
- A It is one of the ward nurse's handwriting.
- Q If we look up above that, we can see that there is also Oramorph prescribed, seemingly at the same time, but those are the sorts of daily prescriptions to be given at six o'clock, ten o'clock, 1400 hours and 1800 hours, is that right?
- G A Yes.
- Q Again help us with how this works. Is this a PRN prescription or a regular prescription?
- A This is a regular prescription.
- H Q You would expect those drugs to be given at those times.

- A A Yes, that is correct.
- Q Not depending upon the nurse's evaluation of pain or anything else.
A No.
- Q Is that your initial, at 2200 hours?
A Yes.
- B Q With an "X" next to it? Is that right?
A I think it is a "T" rather than an "X".
- Q It is a "T", is it. Right, okay.
A I think that is one of my initials.
- C Q That is you? All right. You gave those drugs when? On which day?
A On 26 March 1999 at 2200 hours.
- Q And at ---
A And then again on 27 March 1999 at 6 o'clock in the morning.
- D Q So do we have to go up to the top for that?
A Yes.
- Q And you would have been giving the patient those drugs because they were written up?
A Yes.
- E Q On 26 March, I just want to understand this. Have you given any drugs in the evening of the 26th?
A At 2200 hours?
- Q Yes?
A I have given Oramorph.
- F Q In your statement you also referred to 23.15. I have to confess that I have not been able to find that.
A It is probably the same thing.
- Q It is probably the same thing?
A The due time for the drug would have been 2200 hours but it was probably administered at 23.15.
- G Q Then, on 27 March, as you told us, in the morning, you have given some more drugs - yes?
A Yes.
- Q I think you have witnessed Staff Nurse Lloyd on 28 March giving her drugs. Would you have had reference to any of the nursing notes at the time that you gave these drugs, or witnessed these drugs being given?
H A I think so, yes.

- A
- Q If you go back to page 96, you will find a nursing care plan. If we look at the bottom of that page – I do not think this is your writing, is it? It has a big “84” in bold but it is actually page 96, with two lines either side of it. Do you have that?
- A Yes.
- B
- Q Is this your writing anywhere?
- A No.
- Q At the bottom we see 28 March:
- “Is having regular Oramorph, but still in pain.”
- On 28 March:
- C
- “Has been vomiting with Oramorph. Advised by Dr Barton to stop Oramorph.”
- So you would not have stopped the Oramorph unless told to by Dr Barton?
- A Unless the patient was vomiting but probably after speaking to Dr Barton or getting authorisation.
- D
- Q That is all that I ask you about that patient. We are going to move on to Mr Packman. That is file J. Is it fair to say, you do have a little bit of recollection about this gentleman, Geoffrey Packman? Let us get you to the notes first of all.
- A Okay.
- Q Would you go first of all to pages 171, 174 and 175 you will find the drug charts. Do you remember that this patient was a patient with pressure sores?
- E
- A I think I do, yes.
- Q And we know that he was admitted to your ward on 23 August 1999. What, if anything, can you remember at the moment about this man’s sores?
- A If I can recall correctly, I think they were large.
- Q And was he a very large man?
- F
- A I think he was, yes.
- Q Because you were dealing with these patients on night duty, does it follow that the decision to initiate syringe drivers and the decision to initiate opiates was more often made during the day?
- A Yes.
- G
- Q Does that follow for all of the patients that we have been looking at?
- A Yes.
- Q So when you would come to a patient at night, they would – if they were going to be on a syringe driver – in general already have been on a syringe driver?
- A Yes.
- H

A Q And part of your duty would be to continue with that syringe driver and ensure that it was operating correctly?

A Yes, that is correct.

Q I think before we get to a syringe driver with this patient, can we just look at the issue of Oramorph first of all. Then if we go to page 174, I think we can see Oramorph was written up. First of all we are going to look over the page as well. There are more references to Oramorph on the following page. Oramorph was written up on the 26 August. Is that right?

B A Yes.

Q And all of these prescriptions are written up by Dr Barton. Can we also see that there is a range prescription written up for diamorphine?

A Yes.

C Q I just want to understand this. If we go over the page to 175 can we see there is a regular prescription and Oramorph has been written up as well?

A Yes.

Q That is 10 mg in 5 ml. Is that right?

A Yes, that is correct.

D Q I just want to deal with what you administered. Do you have the originals? We do not have those. We may have to find that. I am sure we have it somewhere. In your statement you make reference, I think, to witnessing the administration of Oramorph by Staff Nurse Irene Dorrington on 26 August at 22.55?

A Yes.

E Q Can you see that entry?

A Yes.

Q Where?

A On 26 August.

Q Yes. At page ---?

A Page 172 . At page -175-.

F Q At 175?

A Yes.

Q I see. Is it the second row down?

A Second row down, yes.

G Q Was that 20 mg?

A Yes.

Q Then on 27 August have you witness that administration? Again, according to your statement you said "22.15: I have signed that I witnessed the administration of Oramorph. This is from the controlled drugs record."

A Yes.

H

- A Q You did not give the drugs yourself, but they were being given?
A Yes.
- Q It may be obvious but what is the purpose of giving an extra 20 mg dose, as it were, in the evening?
A The dose in the evening we were given to believe was a stronger dose so that the patient was comfortable throughout the night.
- B Q Right?
A Because it would have lasted until six o'clock in the morning.
- Q Has the same happened on the 28th and the 29th?
A Yes.
- C Q Just going back to the page before, please, we can see that the syringe driver was started on the 26th, so three days after the patient's admission, at 40 mg diamorphine. Yes?
A Yes.
- Q The minimum dose prescribed was 40 mg?
A Yes.
- D Q And as a nurse would you take it, are you entitled to administer to the patient any less than the minimum dose?
A No.
- Q So on 26 August the syringe driver is set up so the patient receives 40 mg over a 24-hour period, together with midazolam. Do we see that?
A Is it actually the 26th, or is it the 30th, which is written below.
- E Q I am sorry – I think you may be right. It is written up for the 26 August, and then it may be administered on the 30th. Let us just have a look at the original. Can I pass the witness the original? (Document handed to the witness) We know from the nursing notes that the syringe driver was actually commenced at 14.45 in the afternoon of 30 August. It is quite difficult to read the prescription sheet.
A It is, yes.
- F Q Does it look like the 30th?
A It does look like the 30th.
- Q So on the days leading up to the 30th, as you described, on 26, 27, 28 and 29 the patient is on Oramorph with an extra dose given at night?
A Yes.
- G Q And then the diamorphine is started intravenously ?
A Subcutaneously.
- Q Sorry. You are quite right. It is subcutaneously. So far as the initiation of the syringe driver is concerned, as you have indicated, that would be based on the doctor's prescription?
A Yes.
- H

A Q And the doctor's assessment?
A Yes.

Q Can we put that away, please. The last patient I want to ask you anything about is, I think, Mrs Devine. Would you put that file away and turn to patient K, please. Do you have any recollection of Elsie Devine?

A No.

B Q Again, I think the only part of her notes that I want you to have a look at please is page 281, and could you keep a finger there, please, and also turn up page 223. Again, this is just to orientate you and just to see if this triggers any memory.

A Okay.

C Q So do you have page 223 as, I think, a nursing note – I think the nursing summary of significant events?

A Yes, I do.

Q We can see at the top of the page that this patient was admitted on 21 October with increasing confusion and aggression. At the bottom of the page we see that on 19 November there is a note:

D "Marked deterioration over last 24 hours. Extremely aggressive this a.m. Refusing all help from staff..."

And then she is given chlorpromazine at 8.30 and then, over the page, we see a syringe driver was commenced at 9.25. By 9.25 you would have been well off duty, as it were?

A Yes.

E Q But just reading through these notes again, does it bring back to mind the patient at all? During the day, apparently, she was aggressive?

A I think I have some vague recollection of her.

Q But can you tell us what that recollection is?

A I can remember an incident shortly before I went off duty where she was very aggressive, or she became very aggressive.

F Q Right. Would you normally have made a note of that?

A Probably, but it might have depended what time it was. I think if ---

Q Would the note have appeared here in the summary?

A It would, if I had made a note.

G Q Could you just look through pages 223 and 224 please. I think we have identified all the writing here.

A No entries by me.

Q And if that sort of incident did occur but you did not note it, would you relate it orally to the day staff?

A Yes.

H

A Q But it is the sort of thing that you should have noted if it had happened, or not necessarily?
 A I think, if I can remember rightly at the time, although I was based on a ward, I would have been the nurse in charge of the hospital and looking after minor injuries as well, so there would have been another staff nurse actually in charge of the ward who probably would have made notes as such.

B Q Or not?
 A Or tended to make more of the notes. Yes. Or not.

Q I think so far as this patient is concerned, you witnessed some withdrawals of diamorphine, not administered by you, and so I am not going to ask you about those. I said that was the last patient. I think there may be one more reference to you in the notes of Jean Stevens, but it may be that we do not need to turn it up. Would you just give me a moment? Yes. It is Patient L and you, I think, have simply verified her death?

C A All right.

Q You can turn it up certainly if you want to remind yourself. It is page 1292, right at the back of the bundle. Do you have that?

A Yes, I have found it.

D Q This patient was transferred to Daedalus ward – so not your ward – but nevertheless you have, as I think we can see at the bottom, witnessed the verification of her death. Would that be because, as senior nurse, you would have been called over to do that?

A Yes.

Q But normally you would not be on Daedalus Ward?
 A Occasionally, but it was not my regular ward.

E Q As we saw when we started with Mrs Gladys Richards, she was actually also on Daedalus ward, but you performed a specific duty presumably because you were the senior nurse and the patient had died.

A Yes.

MR KARK: Thank you very much. Wait there, please.

F Cross-examined by MR JENKINS

Q Mrs Tubritt, I am going to ask you some questions on behalf of Dr Barton. If you keep that folder open in front of you and just turn to page 1337, I think there is a note of yours about Mrs Stevens.

A Yes.

G Q It is fairly legible, so I do not think I need ask you to read it out. You gave evidence at the inquest, did you not?

A Yes.

Q And I asked you a few questions then.

A Yes.

H

A Q Is it right that Dr Barton, during the time that you had worked on the same patient that she was working with, you thought her to be very conscientious as a doctor?

A Yes, I do, and I did then.

Q She was, so far as you could tell, hard-working?

A Very.

B Q And always concerned to do the best for the patients?

A Yes, she was.

Q The staff knew that if Dr Barton needed to be contacted, she could be telephoned.

A Yes.

Q And that was no problem at all.

C A No problem at all.

Q You have been asked about a number of specific patients and you have been asked to look at their medical records. These are obviously the patients with whom the Panel are concerned in 1996 and thereafter. Would it be right to say that you would not have given medication to any of those patients unless you, as a nurse, thought it was appropriate?

A Correct.

D Q You were in a position, with the patient in front of you, to discuss matters with another qualified nurse.

A Yes.

Q You had had the experience of dealing with that and other patients and you would be able to judge their level of comfort or their level of need for the medication.

E A Yes.

Q If you had felt that the medication that was written up for the patient was inappropriate, you would not have given it, would you?

A No, that is correct.

Q That would be your duty as well as what you would want.

F A Exactly.

Q Is it right that in the mid to late 1990s, the War Memorial Hospital was taking patients that were often elderly and often had many complicated medical histories.

A That is correct.

G Q Did it feel, as a nurse on Dryad ward, that you may be taking patients that other hospitals locally would not have wanted to take?

A Yes, it did.

Q Were the patients often in poor condition when they arrived with you?

A Very poor condition, some of them.

H

A Q Was it obvious, as a nurse, with a number of years experience then, that a lot of the patients who were transferred in the mid to late 1990s were unlikely to leave the War Memorial Hospital?

A Yes, that is correct.

Q Your assessment of a number of the patients was that they were in poor shape; they were towards the very end of their lives.

B A Yes, they were.

Q Can I come to the beginning of the 1990s, because that is a time you have been asked a lot of questions about and you have been asked to look at a number of documents. Would it be fair to say that by 1996 and thereafter, any concerns that you might have had in 1991 had been resolved?

A I think so. I cannot remember being concerned at the latter date.

C

Q You were asked questions by several people at the inquest. Is it right that you said that by 1996, you had no concerns about anything that had affected you earlier on?

A I cannot recall having any concerns.

Q In the early 1990s, right at the beginning, obviously we were dealing with a different ward and what you have told us is that there were some new staff on Redclyffe.

D A Yes, there were.

Q There were some staff who had been there for many years.

A Yes, correct.

Q Was there a process going on of the two sets of staff getting to know each other?

A Yes, there was.

E

Q I think there were some tensions.

A There were.

Q The day staff and the night staff did not always speak with one voice.

A No.

F

Q On top of that, is it right that the mix of patients that the Redclyffe Annex had been taking had been changing over the last couple of years?

A Yes.

Q Right at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, you were getting some patients on to the ward that were really rather poorly.

A Yes, that is correct.

G

Q I think before that, in the late 1980s, the patients had not needed a great deal of nursing or medical care.

A That is true.

Q As the type of patient changed, you were dealing with more complicated patients and I think the nursing and medical needs of those patients changed as well.

H A Yes, that is correct.

A

Q Was that one of the issues that was arising in 1991?

A I think it was. There were a lot of changes.

Q Not just personnel or the type of patient, but the types of treatment that patients were getting, including giving opiates by syringe driver.

A That is correct.

B

Q You have told us that your introduction to a syringe driver was by a Sister [Code A] who basically showed you a syringe driver and told you to get on with it.

A Yes.

Q Did that feel like that was adequate training for someone on the night staff?

A No, it did not.

C

Q What about your night nursing colleagues? Were they getting any more training in the use of syringe drivers than you?

A I think they had less training.

Q So is this the picture that we should have of 1991 and the events that led up to the meetings that we have seen notes from: that you and your night staff colleagues, with no training at all, were being expected to deal with complicated patients and syringe drivers containing diamorphine?

A Yes.

D

Q Which you had never really dealt with before, syringe drivers containing that type of drug.

A No, that is true.

E

Q Was it your understanding then, at the time that concerns were raised, that it should only be patients who had pain that should be put on a syringe driver and diamorphine?

A At the time, yes.

Q At the time. So concerns were raised, as we have seen, essentially by night staff I think.

A Yes.

F

Q You, Nurse Giffin, Enrolled Nurse Turnbull.

A Yes.

Q Were you the three main people who were raising concerns?

A We were the main people. There were other people that were concerned, but did not want their names involved in anything.

G

Q A significant part of that was the failure to have provided you with training up to that point.

A Yes.

H

Q We know that there were meetings at which various members of the administration were present, Isabel Evans for one.

A A Yes.

Q We know that a Dr Logan, who was a consultant geriatrician, was present at a meeting and he explained how he wanted his patients to be dealt with.

A Yes.

B Q Were you given the explanation that diamorphine should not just be used for pain, but it had other uses as well?

A I think so, yes.

Q That syringe drivers were extremely useful as a means of ensuring a regular administration of medication to a patient so that their blood levels of the drug did not go up and down.

A Yes.

C Q I think you explained when you were interviewed by the police the benefits of a syringe driver, in that it did not lead to peaks and troughs in the patient.

A Yes.

Q Had you known that before the sort of conversations that were had around 1991?

A I would not have thought so, no.

D Q Is it right that you were told in about 1991 about other uses of diamorphine: for breathlessness or for agitation?

A Yes.

E Q Is it right that after those concerns had been raised and explanations had been given, I think you had been told by doctors other than Dr Logan, but by people like Sister Hamblin as well about the benefits of syringe drivers and diamorphine?

A Yes.

Q Is it right that communication between day staff and night staff started to get better?

A I think it did.

F Q What you have told us is that you organised courses for yourself to go on.

A Yes.

Q I do not know. Did the hospital or the administration organise courses for your colleagues, did they have to do it themselves or just rely on a talk from Dr Logan?

A Courses were available usually at QA. They were sometimes advertised and it was up to us whether we applied to attend or not. They were mostly short courses: an hour, a couple of hours at most.

G Q I think by the time 1996 arrived, the time of the patients with which the Panel are dealing, your knowledge was significantly greater.

A Yes.

Q And your understanding of the use of syringe drivers.

A Yes.

H

A Q That is how we reached the point that you were comfortable with the doses that you have been taken through by Mr Kark.

A Yes.

Q So again, what had happened in 1991 was perhaps as a result of inadequate training of staff and, because of that, inadequate understanding by night staff.

A Yes.

B Q Can I just deal with two other issues? One is hydration. If a patient is right at the end of their life and they are drifting in and out of consciousness, perhaps receiving medication by a syringe driver, but maybe not, is it your understanding that there may be good reasons not to give hydration to a patient?

A I believe that hydration would have been of little benefit at that point.

C Q In fact, it can cause problems, can it not?

A Yes.

Q The last issue I ask about is this. You were asked about the entry that there might be in medical records by a doctor, "I am happy for nursing staff to verify death" or something of that nature. You have told us that you understood from that that the patient was very ill, very poorly, or that they may die soon.

D A Yes.

Q I think the most important information that a nurse would get before they start the shift is at handover. Would that be right?

A Yes.

E Q What has happened before may be irrelevant now; the patient's condition may have changed.

A Yes.

Q And you would expect at handover to be given information about how the patient has been doing over the last shift and is likely to do on the shift you are just about to nurse.

A Yes.

F MR JENKINS: I am very grateful, Mrs Tubritt. Thank you very much.

Re-examined by MR KARK

G Q I only have one matter I want to ask you in re-examination. Going back to the 1991 matters, who was it who explained to you, as it were, that you had had this misunderstanding as a result of which your mind changed and you had a better understanding? Who were you dealing with?

A I cannot recall any one person explaining. I think it was more of a gradual thing, you know, as I gained knowledge.

Q Prior to working at Redclyffe, had you worked in palliative care before?

A Not in a nursing capacity.

H MR KARK: Thank you.

A THE CHAIRMAN: We are going to take another break now and resume at 12 o'clock, please.

(The Panel adjourned for a short time)

B THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, everyone. I have asked for the witness not to be called back immediately because what I am about to say really has nothing to do with that witness at all. It is a matter that I am raising at this point simply because we have come to the time when there is a growing sense amongst the members of the Panel absolutely, including myself, that we felt there is a need for us to make this point. We do so, if I may put it this way, with the greatest of respect to fine and senior advocates appearing before us. We do so because we feel that it would be helpful to the advocates to understand what is helpful to the Panel in going about our business.

C We fully understand what the rules are concerning the manner in which cross-examinations are to be conducted and when leading questions are permissible and when they are not. So what I am going to say is placed before you as much as anything as an observation. Nobody has to take the slightest bit of notice of what I say, but it is simply this.

D Where there are witnesses who are to be cross-examined and those witnesses are in the main, shall we say, not hostile to the cross-examiner, there is a great deal of value for the Panel if the cross-examiner gives that witness as great an opportunity as they might think sensible to answer with their own words. The difficulty with a large amount of leading is that at the end of the day one really hears a great deal from the cross-examiner and very little from the witness, other than to agree. In terms of the impact that that makes on the Panel, I am sure you can understand it is a lot less than it is if we hear the words of the witnesses themselves.

E I put this forward at this stage not particularly as a result of the cross-examination of the last witness, but rather because this is a sense that has been growing amongst the Panel for some time now. We take, as I am sure you appreciate, very seriously the need for us to weigh each witness carefully and it is very difficult to do that when a large part of their testimony is really boiling down to agreeing or not agreeing with what is said. So if possible, we would like to hear far more of the individual witness's own words in cross-examination. As I say, it is a matter for all of you whether you go along with that or not. Mr Langdale?

F MR LANGDALE: Sir, thank you for those observations. I make no comment about them. We have heard them, but of course the Panel will understand that with a large number of witnesses, the words being put to them are things they had already themselves said. For example, the last witness gave evidence at the inquest and we have heard that with other witnesses. So that is the case very often; I am not saying in every case, because obviously we have to put our case to a witness. If they agree with it, fine. If they do not, then they will say so.

G With a large number of witnesses this is quoting back not counsel's words but what the witness himself or herself has already said. For example, I know that we are going to be getting to one of the consultants before too long, Dr Reid, and there is a mass of material where he has already said certain things. I can say now that if they are not elicited in examination-in-chief, I shall obviously be asking him what he said based on what he has already said.

H

A

THE CHAIRMAN: That is helpful, Mr Langdale. Of course the Panel has already appreciated the fact that a lot of the style of questioning that we have seen does result in the saving of a great deal of time, particularly where people have already said the same thing before, but the point that we really want to get across is that we have not heard that before. It is the lack of spontaneity which, frankly, reduces the impact of evidence that should be impacting on us more than it does in that format. If it means that things go a little bit slower so that, at least in the first instance, a witness is given the opportunity to put it their way, of course there is absolutely the opportunity to come back and say, "On another occasion did you not say such and such ..." This was designed to be helpful because we really do wish to be giving the maximum weight to the words that are spoken to us, and it is merely observation that it is difficult to do so when they come from the mouth of counsel rather than from the witness, even though it may very well originally have come from the witness. If the same question that had been put to the witness on the previous occasion could be put, it might well elicit the same answer, and that would be much fresher and have much greater impact on the Panel than if it came, in the first instance, from the mouth of counsel.

B

C

MR LANGDALE: Sir, thank you again for the observation. I simply say two things in response to that. The mere fact that a witness agrees with the way that it is put by counsel should not, with great respect, reduce the impact of the answer. It may be another illustration that it is 100 per cent correct. The other difficulty which we all have to bear in mind as advocates – and we appreciate the difficulties in eliciting evidence sometimes: with some witnesses it is very easy and sometimes it is very difficult – and one of the things which counsel tries to avoid in cross-examination, when one already knows what the witness has said in answer to a question, is asking an open question, getting a slightly different answer, and having to say, "Do you remember on 14 April you said this? Would that be correct?" That is partially what we are trying to avoid.

D

E

Sir, I will say no more because I am slowing things down even more as I speak. We will bear in mind what you have said. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is very kind. Thank you.

Mr Kark?

F

MR KARK: I have no observation to make, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Very well. Then we will have the witness back, please. (Pause)

Welcome back, Mrs Tubbritt. I am sorry we kept you out for a little while. We were dealing with matters that had absolutely nothing to do with yourself and there was no point in asking you to sit there whilst we did so.

G

I remind you that you remain on oath. I think I am right in saying that we have now completed questions from the barristers – at least for now – and so we come to the stage where members of the Panel are able to ask questions of you if they have any.

I am going to turn first of all to Mrs Pamela Mansell, who is a lay member of the Panel.

H

A

Questioned by THE PANEL

MRS MANSELL: Hello. I am really wanting to get an understanding of this aspect from a practical perspective and from the nursing perspective. We have heard a lot of evidence to date about the positive and negative effects of both Oramorph and diamorphine.

A Yes.

B

Q We have also looked at a lot of patients who have been very poorly and deteriorating. I need to understand just a little bit more how you, as a nurse, distinguish within that deterioration what is the contribution of the drugs and what is the failing health of the patient. How do you distinguish which is causing the deterioration? For instance, Oramorph can contribute to sickness and it can contribute to confusion.

A Yes.

C

Q We know that diamorphine can contribute to repression of the systems, et cetera. When you are looking at the deterioration of that patient ----

A Sometimes it can be difficult, but I think mostly it is experience.

Q I think I need a little bit more than that if you can help us.

A It is hard to put into words exactly. I think it would be looking at each individual patient, looking at their specific symptoms, looking at the whole picture, the drugs, the patient, their physical condition.

D

Q Because, you see, I look at some of the notes that we have had and it can tell me that the patient is restless, anxious, agitated, and that is an indication of deterioration.

A Yes.

E

Q And hence a decision to increase the medication.

A Yes.

Q This does not help me to understand how that is different from if it was the medication that was causing that agitation.

A I see.

F

Q I was just trying to get from the nursing perspective your sorting out of the difference.

A I think that is quite difficult. It really is experience, I think.

Q If you cannot help me any more ----

A I am sorry, I am not sure if I can put that into words.

G

Q I cannot see the safeguards in that, and so that is what I was trying to get out, how it might not lead to moving to increase the drugs.

A Yes, certainly, I understand.

Q And yet it might have been the drugs that was causing this to start off with. Saying it is experience does not feel like a big safeguard to me. But maybe you cannot help me.

A I cannot think of a way to explain it. I am sorry.

H

MRS MANSELL: Okay. Thank you.

A

THE CHAIRMAN: I am going to turn now to Mr William Payne who is a lay member of the Panel.

MR PAYNE: Good afternoon. Just to go on from where my colleague has started, you said it is about experience.

A Yes.

B

Q About the individual patient.

A Yes.

Q Therefore it must be the amount of experience of the individual nurse.

A Yes.

C

Q You could be in a situation where perhaps a less experienced nurse than yourself is having to make a decision whether or not to increase or decrease the amount of drugs, because they are perhaps reading the signs and symptoms incorrectly.

A That could happen, but often, if that is the case, if I was in that position, I would probably try to find another more senior or experienced member of staff to discuss my concerns with.

D

Q With the greatest of respect, you are still nursing, I believe.

A Yes.

Q So you have a vast, wide range of experience.

A Yes.

E

Q And you are able to draw on that experience to say, "I'm not necessarily sure about this."

A Yes.

Q "I need to confer with someone." But 15 years ago, or whatever time it was, you were not as experienced.

A No.

F

Q Would all your colleagues have thought that in that same respect?

A I like to think so. I think a lot of them would have, yes.

MR PAYNE: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Dr Roger Smith is a medical member of the Panel.

G

MR SMITH: Hello, Mrs Tubbritt. Just thinking about the drug Kardex, in general, on a drug Kardex there are two kinds of prescription. The first is a PRN prescription.

A Yes.

Q And if it is written up on a particular day, that date is there.

A Yes.

H

- A Q To say that it was written up today. How do you know, as a nurse in charge at night, when to give a drug that is written up PRN?
A Do you mean by the chart?
- Q The chart is your instruction to give the drug PRN.
A Yes.
- B Q How do you decide when to give such a drug?
A If we felt the patient needed it by looking at the patient's physical condition.
- Q You make a decision based upon the state of the patient.
A Yes.
- C Q The other kind of prescription is called a regular prescription.
A Yes.
- Q Or it was on the drug charts at Gosport. It is written up today, with today's date, regular.
A Yes.
- D Q When would that drug be given?
A On that day.
- Q If it is not given for three days, what can be the explanation for that?
A There could be several explanations. It could be that the patient was unable to take it, or the patient had refused it, or the drug was unavailable.
- E Q How would we know that?
A Hopefully it would be recorded somewhere.
- Q Somewhere in the nursing notes or the medical notes.
A Yes, in the nursing notes.
- Q Somebody would have explained why a prescribed drug has not been given.
A Yes.
- F Q Is that because a prescribed drug on regular prescriptions is an instruction to give?
A Yes.
- Q Thank you. That is very helpful because there is just something that is bothering me about one prescription. In a completely different area, cast your mind back to those days in 1991 when you were still at Redclyffe and you and colleagues made what amounted to quite serious criticisms of drugs and the way they were used.
A Yes.
- G Q I think it is true to say that you stated that you thought that patients had come to harm, or at least one patient had come to harm because of that.
A Yes.
- H Q So your concerns were very serious.

- A A They were at the time, yes.
- Q In the first place, did you feel that your concerns were addressed fairly early on in the year?
- A No.
- B Q Can you say how you felt? Do you remember how you felt after the first meeting?
- A Frustrated, I think.
- Q Because?
- A If I can remember correctly, I think management seemed to be of different beliefs from the rest of us. I am not sure if we were necessarily looking at things from the same angle. We felt frustrated.
- C Q What was your angle?
- A I wanted to make sure patients were being treated correctly. I wanted to make sure that I knew what I was doing.
- Q What do you think their angle was?
- A I think they were looking at ... That we were maybe even accusing people of things, that we were just looking and saying, "Well, patients are having too many drugs" without looking at the bigger picture.
- D Q You did not think they really listened very hard.
- A No.
- Q But it festered.
- A Yes.
- E Q And then you made a second complaint.
- A Yes.
- Q Towards the end of the year. You were asked, "Do you think they took it more seriously the second time?"
- A I think they did, yes.
- F Q Indeed, I have forgotten her name, but the matron asked you for specific evidence on particular patients.
- A Yes.
- Q To back up what you had been saying.
- A Yes.
- G Q And nobody replied to that request.
- A No.
- Q Why do you think that was?
- A I honestly cannot remember.
- H

- A Q Was it because you did not have any specific information? I am sorry, that sounds like a criticism. I do not mean it to be a criticism.
A I can remember, at the meeting with Code A that we were able to access controlled drugs books and to look at records and things, and at a later date when we tried, I do not think we were able to find necessarily what we needed to sort of back up our concerns.
- B Q Your first approaches were to "management".
A Yes.
- Q Is that management or is it nurse management?
A Nurse management.
- Q To the people you relate to.
A Yes.
- C Q Your second complaint was, similarly, to the same people.
A Yes.
- Q Then doctors started to be involved in the process, did they not?
A Yes.
- D Q Was it as easy to make complaint in general? Was it easy to make complaint about things that were going on once there were doctors in the room?
A I think for some people no.
- Q Why do you think that is?
A I think people were concerned for themselves, really – how long they would still be in a job, how things would affect them.
- E Q Why should that be, in 1991?
A I think that is just the air ... That is how it felt at the time. It felt too definite sides: them and us.
- Q Sides?
A Yes.
- F Q But you are looking after the same people: patients.
A I know.
- Q Does that mean there is a sense that a nurse would find it very difficult to criticise a doctor?
A Well, to criticise – full stop.
- G Q Would it not be fair to say that in a way you were criticising your own nurse management by going to them and complaining.
A Yes.
- Q That was easier.
A Yes.
- H

A Q Why was it more difficult to complain about or to a doctor in 1991?
A I think we always felt doctors were superior and that was just how we felt.

Q Is a doctor's view of a problem more valuable than a nurse's view of a problem?
A Not necessarily.

B Q Was there a perception that it might have been in 1999?
A Yes.

Q Would that amount to a fear that a nurse would not be believed but a doctor would?
A Yes, I think so. Yes.

Q Is that a generalisation of what would happen nearly 20 years ago?
A Yes, it would be.

C Q In any kind of complaint?
A Well, I can only talk about the complaint I was concerned in. That is how I felt.

DR SMITH: Thank you very much.

D THE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Tubbritt, it comes to me now. I am also a lay member of the Panel. Mrs Mansell raised with you an issue about the potential for an error in ascribing observed deterioration in a patient to something other than the effect of the drug or drugs that the patient was taking. I think you said that the best way that you could describe the way in which patients were safeguarded against the risk of a mistake being made in that regard, was the experience of the nursing staff. I am not sure if you did mention also not just their wider experience in nursing but their experience of the patient himself or herself. If you did not, would you accept that experience of that individual patient ---

E A Yes.

Q --- is important in that regard?
A Yes, I would.

F Q It is right, is it not, that in many instances deterioration will be noted in a patient of whom the nurse has very little experience because they have only recently come onto the ward?

A That is true.

Q In those circumstances the danger and the risk would be much greater than a patient that the nurse had been nursing, perhaps for months?

A That is true.

G Q Thank you for that. Following on slightly with a point that was raised by Dr Smith, the writing up of a prescription and when one would expect that prescription to have been administered: in your evidence today in respect of Patient I, it was pointed out to you that there was one time at which the prescription was written up for administration, but apparently a different time at which it was actually administered?

A Yes.

H

A Q I think it is clear to all of us how the two can, for the best of reasons, be different. What would assist me, at any rate, is to know what sort of difference would be permissible from the point of view of a nurse signing before they would feel a need to put a note of explanation in? So, for example, if a particular dose is due at, say, 10 a.m. and it is not, for the best of reasons, administered until a later time – we have heard from you that if it were an hour or two hours, even later, it would still get the signature and the tick.

A Yes.

B Q How much further would it have to be outside the time before you would expect yourself or a colleague to feel the need to put in a note to the effect, actually this was delivered at a different time?

A I think it would need to be quite a reasonable time outside of the prescribed time.

C Q And what would that be, a “reasonable time”? Are we talking three hours, four, five, six?

A Probably less than that. Probably no more than about two hours, perhaps.

Q So up to and including two hours, you would not expect there to be a note, but thereafter you would?

A Yes.

D Q And I can absolutely see that in terms of if it is administered late. Are there occasions when it can work the other way and it is administered earlier than the time expected? Say ten o'clock a.m. was the time that it is written up for; would it only ever be potentially late, or could it also potentially be actually administered early?

A Possibly only a few minutes early.

E Q Right?

A But it is usually at the exact time, or as close to it.

Q Possibly a few minutes early and possible up to two hours late ---?

A Late.

Q --- after which one would expect, if it were later, that there would be a note indicating the same?

A Yes.

Q That is extremely helpful. Thank you very much indeed. That completes the questions from the Panel. I now am required to ask if there are any questions arising out of the Panel questions that the barristers wish to ask. Mr Jenkins?

G MR JENKINS: Just a few, if I may.

Further cross-examined by MR JENKINS

Q The patient's condition.

A Yes?

H Q You can tell a great deal about a patient just by looking at their skin, can you not?

A Yes.

- A
- Q Can you expand that answer for me?
A You can see their colour; you can see whether they are hydrated; whether they are well oxygenated; their nutritional state.
- Q What if the skin is breaking down?
A That would show that they were probably under-nourished, that they were generally in a poor condition.
- B
- Q If you are looking at a patient and you look at the limbs, arms and legs ---
A Yes.
- Q --- can that tell you a great deal about the general health of the patient?
A They could become cyanosed.
- C
- Q Blue tinge?
A Blue tinge, yes.
- Q Not enough oxygen getting to their ---?
A Not enough oxygen.
- D
- Q --- tissues. If you see patients whose limbs are wasted?
A Yes.
- Q The word "cachectic" ---
A Yes.
- E
- Q --- is sometimes used of patients, I think ---
A Yes.
- Q --- towards the ends of their lives if they have had a lengthy decline?
A Yes.
- Q Again, if you see a patient who is rather wasted, or very wasted, is that going to tell an experienced nurse a great deal about their recent health, if they have not been eating properly for quite a while?
A Yes. That is how it would be.
- F
- Q You are not going to become severely depleted or wasted after being off your food for two days, are you?
A No.
- G
- Q Again, if you are nursing a patient it is easy to tell whether there is swelling, whether the patient has temperature?
A Yes.
- Q You can see their breathing. You can see how laboured they may be?
A Yes.
- H
- Q Just sitting around or lining around?

- A A Yes.
- Q Is it fair to say, you can tell a great deal about a patient's condition just by looking at them?
- A That is true.
- B Q Is it right that with a patient who does not speak to you at all but whom you are nursing, moving in the bed, perhaps changing a dressing or changing something in the bedclothes, you are still able to tell a great deal about their level of agitation and draw inferences about whether they are in pain or not?
- A Yes.
- Q And would you be aware if a patient was unconscious and unrousable?
- A I think so, yes.
- C Q And should we draw a distinction between a patient who is unconscious and unrousable, and one who is responding, who is clearly in some discomfort when you are nursing them?
- A Yes.
- D Q Can I turn to a second topic. You were asked about 1991.
- A Yes.
- Q And you were asked about the circumstances in which you raised concerns?
- A Yes.
- E Q What you had told me and told the Panel in your earlier answers was that at the time you were raising concerns, your knowledge was limited as to the use of syringe drivers and the circumstances in which it might be appropriate to use them?
- A Yes, that is correct.
- Q And you have made it clear that those shortcomings in your knowledge, because you had not been trained, were such that the doctors were giving you far more information?
- A Yes.
- F Q Certainly Dr Logan was?
- A Yes.
- Q In the last of the meetings that we have heard about?
- A Yes, that is true.
- G Q And were you well aware when you raised your concerns that you needed to have more training? You needed to have more information?
- A Yes, we were.
- Q Is that part of the reason why you were raising concerns, but not challenging the doctors, because the doctors knew why the drugs were being prescribed?
- A Yes.
- H Q The doctors knew why syringe drivers were being written up?

A A Yes, that is probably true.

Q And was it absolutely plain, certainly from Dr Logan, the geriatrician, the consultant, that that was the way he wanted the patients to be treated?

A Yes.

B Q And Dr Barton was treating patients in accordance with what Dr Logan was saying was appropriate?

A Yes. That is true.

Q And is it fair to say that the senior nursing staff – sisters – who may have been at the meetings were agreeing with the approach that Dr Logan was advocating?

A Yes.

C MR JENKINS: I ask this last question, sir, with some trepidation because it does not strictly arise from any questions the Panel have asked. I was going to ask the witness why she says Dr Barton is a good doctor – if that is a fair one to ask.

THE CHAIRMAN: It certainly was a fair one to ask at the appropriate time, but I do not suppose Mr Kark is going to take particular objection to it. He is indicating not, so if you feel a burning desire to ask it, please do so.

D MR JENKINS: I do feel a burning desire to ask it in the light of observations that have been made. (To the witness) You thought Dr Barton conscientious?

A Yes, I do.

Q That was my word, and you agreed with me?

A Yes. That is true.

E Q I put it to you that Dr Barton wanted the best for her patients?

A Yes, she did.

Q And you agreed?

A I did, yes.

F Q I want you to tell us why you thought that?

A She was always helpful. My experience from seeing Dr Barton at work, she always appeared to do the best for her patients, whatever that might be. She strived to give them the best care.

MR JENKINS: I am grateful. Thank you very much.

G THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark?

Further re-examined by MR KARK

Q You have just been asked about Dr Logan?

A Yes.

H Q And Dr Logan was here consultant on Redclyffe?

- A A He would have been based at QA.
- Q He was at QA, was he?
A Yes.
- Q At the time when Dr Barton was on Redclyffe?
A Yes.
- B Q What was Dr Logan's approach to diamorphine? To the use of diamorphine?
A I honestly cannot remember.
- Q You were asked by Mr Payne, and also by the Chairman, about being able to tell the state of the patient requires, first of all, a good knowledge of nursing?
A Yes.
- C Q And good experience, but also good knowledge of the patient?
A Yes.
- Q And a good knowledge of the patient, is that something that is built up over a period of time?
A Usually, yes.
- D Q When a patient first comes into your hospital, sometimes they are in a slightly bewildered state, as it were, to be in a new environment?
A That is true, they could be.
- Q And so to get to grips with that patient's needs, and how they responded in different ways, would it take perhaps a little while to get to know that patient after they had transferred?
A Yes, it would.
- E Q But you were asked by Mr Jenkins, and you agree with him, that you could tell a great deal from just looking at the patient?
A Yes, that is true.
- F Q And you used the example of looking at the patient's skin?
A Yes.
- Q And you spoke specifically about oxygen and cyanosis?
A Yes.
- G Q And also breathing becoming laboured?
A Yes.
- Q Were you saying that those are indications for patients' deterioration?
A Yes.
- H Q And do you remember, you were asked by Mrs Mansell on the Panel, who was asking you about how you distinguish between what is the drugs, what is being caused by the drugs, and what is being caused by the illness?

- A A Yes.
- Q Just looking at the question of the skin and cyanosis and laboured breathing, can that be a symptom of either the use of opiates or illness?
- A I would think illness.
- B Q You think illness?
- A Yes.
- Q Why? You do not think morphine has an effect on laboured breathing?
- A It does. It does.
- Q So why would you put, for instance, cyanosis or laboured breathing, down to illness rather than diamorphine?
- C A I do not know.
- Q You do not know? And you also spoke about hydration?
- A Yes.
- Q And a lack of hydration ---
- A Yes.
- D Q --- might be an indication of the patient worsening?
- A Yes.
- Q Getting iller? Is that what you meant?
- A Yes.
- E Q Would that be written down in the notes as "patient deteriorating"?
- A Probably, yes.
- Q If you are not hydrating the patient because they are on a syringe driver, again how do you distinguish between the lack of hydration because there are on a syringe driver and the patient is just getting iller?
- A It would be difficult.
- F Q It would be difficult what - to distinguish?
- A I think so, yes.
- Q Just one last thing. You mentioned, and I may have misheard you, but I just want to make sure that we have asked you everything that we should. You were being asked by Dr Smith about the 1991 complaint and you said that you thought that they took it more seriously the second time, so the back end of the year?
- G A Yes.
- Q But at one stage I thought I heard you say that you were not able to find the records to back up your concerns. Did you say that?
- A I did say that, yes.
- H Q What were you talking about?

A A I can remember at some point during my concerns with colleagues looking for controlled drug books and looking for back-up records, and being unable to find them. I cannot recall exactly when but I can recall that happening.

Q During this period?

A Yes.

B Q It may be that somebody else was looking at them as a result of concerns?
A Could well have been.

Q You do not know why they were not there.?

A No.

C Q You have also been asked by Dr Smith about the relationship between nurses and doctors and how easy it was for people to make a complaint. Did you at any stage feel that you, or any of your colleagues, were actually being regarded as trouble makers, or anything like that?

A Yes, I think I do.

Q Why did you think that?

A I suppose the attitude of our ward manager towards us.

D Q Was that during the first part of the complaining process, or the second part ---
A Both.

Q --- or throughout? Sorry?

A Throughout, but mostly the first part.

E MR KARK: That is very helpful. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr Kark. Mrs Tubbritt, that brings you to the end of your testimony. We are extremely grateful to you for coming to assist us today. It is only through the presence of witnesses such as yourself that a Panel is able to build up a clearer picture of what happened, very often months, even years in the past. We cannot do it without people like yourself coming, and I want you to know that we are extremely grateful to you for coming to assist us today. You are now free to leave. Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

(The witness withdrew)

G THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, unless there are any short matters that we can usefully deal with now, I propose that we take an early lunch, and start fully at quarter to two.

MR KARK: Yes, certainly. The next witness is Dr Banks. I do not think she will be all afternoon.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed. Quarter to two then, please, ladies and gentlemen.

H

A (Luncheon adjournment)

THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, everyone. I think the witness is being called for, Mr Kark.

VICTORIA BANKS, Affirmed

B (Following introductions by the Chairman)

Examined by MR KARK

Q Is it Dr Victoria Banks?

A Correct.

C Q Are you still employed by the Hampshire Partnership Trust?

A Correct, yes.

Q Could you tell us your position there, please? Are you still a consultant in old age?

A I am a consultant in old age psychiatry.

Q Which hospital are you attached to now?

D A I am based at Moorgreen Hospital in Southampton.

Q I think obviously you went through your general training and then you began specialising in psychiatry in the mid 1980s.

A Yes. I did my basic medical training, then general practice training, then psychiatry training.

E Q I think from 1992 until 2002, were you working as a consultant in old age psychiatry in the Gosport catchment area.

A Correct.

Q Between 1992 and 1995, you were based at Knowle Hospital.

A Yes.

F Q Then I think did you move to Mulberry ward at the GWMH?

A Correct.

Q Just tell us a bit about Mulberry Ward. It is within the main hospital, but it is on the first floor.

A It has moved at the moment, but it was on the first floor and Mulberry ward was divided into an organic assessment unit – so that is primarily for people who have dementia – and into a functional unit, which was Mulberry A.

G Q When did the move come about? When did you move to the Mulberry?

A We moved in 1995, sort of June/July. Somewhere around that sort of time.

Q Apart from working on Mulberry ward, did you also do some work at the Phoenix Day Unit?

H

- A A The Phoenix Day Hospital was a day therapy unit for people with mental health problems over 65.
- Q Was that down on the ground floor?
- A That was on the ground floor.
- B Q In fact, it is next to Dryad, I think, but there is a sealed door, as it were, between the two.
- A That is correct, yes.
- Q We have also heard about the Dolphin Day Hospital.
- A Correct.
- C Q Did you have much dealings with the people in that hospital?
- A From time to time I would go to Dolphin Day Hospital and would meet up with Althea Lord, Dr Lord, with whom we sometimes shared the care of patients, and we would see them jointly together.
- Q Was that as an outpatient?
- A That would be as an outpatient, yes.
- D Q So far as Mulberry ward is concerned, how often would you actually attend Mulberry ward and do a session?
- A I would do a session once a week, which would generally be for two or three hours, which was a ward round, and on Friday afternoon I may or may not go to the ward, particularly if there were patients of concern, and just check that there were not any issues that the junior doctors or the nursing staff had any concerns about.
- E Q So when you were not at Mulberry ward, where were you?
- A I had an office in the Gosport War Memorial. I still at that point I think had patients up at Knowle on the continuing care ward and I did a lot of community work and clinic work outside of Gosport War Memorial.
- Q So it is not that you were attached to a different hospital?
- A No.
- F Q This was your base.
- A That was my base, yes.
- Q I want to ask you about two patients that we have been dealing with in this case. I appreciate you have re-read your statements I think.
- A Correct. I have, yes.
- G Q I do not know if you have re-read the notes, but do you have some recollection of these patients?
- A I have some recollection of Mr Pittock. I have, I am afraid, a very vague recollection of Mr Cunningham.
- H Q I am just going to ask you to give us a brief resumé, as it were, with reference to the notes, which I hope will assist you. If you look to your left, I hope you will see a file marked

A Patient A. If you take that file and turn first to page 37. Can I explain that I am not going to ask you to read through the whole of the very extensive notes that I think you made, which will be a relief to you, me and the Panel, but I am just going to ask you to give us a thumbnail sketch. Is it fair to say that you had been looking after Mr Pittock I think since 1992?

A Correct.

B Q He had suffered for a very long time from something you describe in your statement as a chronic resistive depression.

A Correct.

Q A chronic resistive depression is what?

A It is a chronic depressive disorder which responds poorly to treatment and, as a consequence, he was very debilitated by his chronic depressive illness, such that he lacked motivation and drive; his mood was persistently low and he really did very little.

C Q Can you help us, with a patient like this, with that sort of depression, is that anything to do with organic changes in the brain, or is it something quite different?

A It can be, but for Mr Pittock, I do not think – my recollection is that that was not the case. He had been chronically depressed for some years. Depression is a common illness, but at the severe end, for someone like Mr Pittock, there is a significant risk of having a chronic depressive illness that does not respond to treatment and I believe that he fell into that category. But you are correct in saying that there is a sense that cerebrovascular disease can prevent someone with a depressive illness from getting better.

Q If it is organic, presumably it is progressive as well?

A Correct.

E Q In relation to this note that we see at page 37, is this your note?

A No. That is Dr [Code A] note. She would have done the admission clerking.

Q We can see a quarter of the way down the page, “[diagnosis] chronic resistant depression”. Then we can see something about his history, “Feeling very low, inwardly tearful”.

A I think it means “increasingly tearful”.

F Q Again, just skipping forward, if we go to page 48, we see in September 1995, “Informal admission by Dr Banks.”

A That means arranged by me or facilitated by me.

Q “Chronically depressed gentleman.” At the bottom of the page, under “Past Presenting History”, we see, “Chronic depression since ?” and is it SOS?

A I think it is “50s”.

G Q I have consistently misread that. “... 50s when attempted suicide ...”

A Yes.

Q Then over the page, we can see a list of the drugs that he was on.

A Correct.

H Q We can see diazepam. I am looking for any analgesics.

- A A He is not on any on that list.
- Q The diazepam, will that have a sedative effect though?
A It could be quite sedative, yes.
- Q Could I ask you to go, please, to page 54 onwards, which I think deals with his inpatient treatment during this period.
- B A Yes.
- Q Was he under your care in September 1995?
A Yes, he was.
- Q It may be obvious from what you have said, but what were you trying to treat him for?
A Trying to improve his mood.
- C Q If we go to page 55, for instance, we can see on 18 October 1995:
"Ward round, Dr Banks
Eating well
Seems better + brighter – wife has
noticed the improvement
Receiving visitors."
- D Then, "[Therefore] no ECT". Is that electro convulsive therapy>?
A Correct.
- Q Which is sometimes used still I think for depression.
A Yes, it is still used.
- E Q We will find a letter at page 57. This is written by Dr Code A who was your registrar.
A Correct. Well, SHO.
- Q She describes herself as your registrar.
A In that case, she may be a registrar. The titles of junior doctors change over the years. Her role was as a junior doctor, so do not let us get pedantic.
- F Q Again, we can see that it reflects that the patient was admitted on 14 September.
A Correct.
- Q And discharged on 24 October. Where was he? Which hospital does that mean he was at?
G A The admission was to Mulberry Ward at Gosport War Memorial.
- Q We can see, just reading the first few lines:
"This 71 year old gentleman was admitted informally by Dr Banks complaining of an exacerbation of his chronically depressed mood."
- H A Yes.

A

Q Over the page, we see under his mental state examination that he had been very flat and his concentration was very poor. He said if the opportunity to die came along, he would be glad to accept it. Then again over the page, just skipping quickly through, on page 49, under "Treatment and Prognosis", the last four lines:

B

"Leslie's mood did in fact improve quite a bit during admission and he seemed to have more energy and to become more sociable with both patients and visitors. Therefore he was discharged back to his rest home and will be followed up as a day patient attending the ward on Thursdays."

His rest home, I think was that the Hazeldene Rest Home?

A That is correct, yes.

C

Q This was a patient who certainly on occasion was capable of getting a bit better.

A Yes, and sometimes a change of environment for someone like Mr Pittock was enough to enable that to happen.

Q Sadly, if we can move on to page 63 – this is effectively a month and a half after his discharge – he is back in for an informal admission. Again, an informal admission to where?

A To Mulberry ward.

D

Q We can see the presenting complaint, "Everything's horrible". Then the following words are:

"From [Rest Home]
verbally aggressive to wife + staff
staying in bed all day
not mobilising
constipated
not eating well
sleep 'alright'
No DVM"

E

What is DVM?

F

A Diurnal variation in mood.

Q Meaning?

A Diurnal variation in mood is one of the symptoms that you can get with depression, where you feel pretty dreadful in the morning, but by the end of the day your mood has improved and day in, day out, it would present like that. But he did not have that.

G

Q Then:

"Feels bad all the time.
Hopeless + suicidal"

A Correct.

H

A Q Moving on quickly, can we take, please to page 126. This is on 13 December 1995 and there is a reference here to past psychiatric or medical history, Parkinson's disease. Is that a diagnosis that you made?

A No. I cannot recollect that, to be honest, at all.

Q Then we can see:

B "REASON FOR ADMISSION TO HOSPITAL The rest home cannot cope with him, he has put himself to bed and refuses to get up. He has become both physically and verbally aggressive towards staff at the rest home. Lack of energy and self motivation."

I think he then remained in hospital for quite some time over the Christmas period.

A Correct.

C Q Can I take you, please, to page 68, which deals with his moving on from your care. That date at page 68 I think is 4 January 1996.

A It is 4 January 1996.

Q Is this your note?

A No, that is Dr Lord's note.

D Q I am sorry, it is, indeed, Dr Lord's note. It is entitled "ELDERLY MEDICINE" and says, "Thank you [something] ..."

A It says: "Thank you. Frail 82 year old man."

Q "Frail 82 year old man with:

- E
- (1) chronic resistant depression – very withdrawn completely dependent – Barthel 0.
 - (2) Catheter – by-passing
 - (3) Ulceration (superficial) of left buttock and hip."

Then is it:

F (4) hypoproteinaemic."

A Correct.

Q Meaning, what?

A That means that the albumen and the protein in his blood were low – almost certainly related to poor dietary intake.

G Q Can we look at what is suggested below. I appreciate this is not your note but this is, I think, while he is still at your hospital.

A Yes. It was some suggestions as to how we might help Mr Pittock, who was very unwell at that time.

Q Was Dr Lord a geriatrician consultant?

A Dr Lord was a consultant geriatrician.

H

A Q He suggests high protein drips, bladder wash-outs times two per week.
 A That says "[something] tulle to buttock ulcers" and I guess that is a specific dressing that the nurses would know about.

Q Then:

B "I'd be happy to take him over to a long-stay bed at GWMH. I feel his rest home place can now be given up as he's unlikely to return there."
 A Correct.

Q We know, I think, that he transferred to Dryad on 25 January 1996.
 A Correct.

C Q Can you just deal with this position when he left your hospital?
 A Left Code A do you mean?

Q I beg your pardon. You are quite right, left Mulberry Ward.
 A When Mr Pittock left the ward and went to the long-stay ward, to Dryad, his physical health had become the major concern, and although his mental health was definitely an issue, his physical health had deteriorated significantly. The priority at that time was to address his physical health problems rather than his mental health problems.

D Q His physical health problems, as described in that note, were his ulceration.
 A His ulceration.

Q He had had a chest infection since his admission to Mulberry Ward which he had had physio for, two courses of antibiotics. It has added to his physical frailty overall and he was really very frail. By that, I mean generally frail and very poorly. He as not getting out of bed. He was entirely dependent on nursing staff, so despite the best efforts of the nurses, et cetera, we really had not made any headway with him at all.

E Q The suggestion of high protein drinks, bladder wash-outs, et cetera, the purpose of them would be?

F A He had been catheterised, my recollection is, not long before that, because he had gone into retention one night – I think between Christmas and New Year, maybe longer, but it was during his admission – and what was happening was that the urine was by-passing the catheter and coming down the urethra, out of his penis, outside the catheter rather than in the catheter. I am not a physician but I would imagine that is because the catheter was blocked, therefore the washouts were to try to improve the flow of the catheter functioning.

Q And the high protein drinks?

G A To try to help with his poor dietary intake and increase his albumen and protein and his general health.

Q Once he had transferred to Dryad, did you have further dealings with him?

A I did not have further dealings with him.

H Q You deal with this on the last page of you statement from my learned friend. Did you have patients dying on Mulberry Ward?

A A Yes, would did have patients who dies on Mulberry Ward, more likely to be on the organic unit rather than on the functional unit.

Q If there are concerns that someone's physical health is so poor that there is a possibility of them dying, do you have a process you go through?

A We asked Dr Lord, who was our patch geriatrician, to come and assess them and help to make a decision what was the best treatment and intervention for that person.

B Q So that would not be your decision. Would that be a joint decision with Dr Lord?

A It would be a decision of Dr Lord. If she discussed it with me, then it would be clearly a joint decision – there was jointness to it, I guess. It was not always formally a joint decision.

C Q Could we put that file away and turn to the file of Mr Cunningham, file G. At page 112, first of all, please, there is a letter from Dr Lord dealing with the patient's admission to Mulberry Ward. He was admitted on 21 July as an informal admission.

A Correct.

Q Of 1998. Do you have any recollection of this patient now?

A I am very sorry but I do not have an enormous recollection of him. I have some recollection and the recollection is more about a series – I suppose of a process – rather than remembering Mr Cunningham himself.

D Q Let us see if this triggers any memory. If you go to page 465, I think you will see a discharge summary. You are shown, I think, as the named consultant.

A Correct.

E Q Admission date 21 July 1998.

A Yes.

Q From Alverstoke House. Was that a -----

A Alverstoke House was a nursing home in Gosport.

Q "Reasons for admission:

F Mr Cunningham had been attending the Phoenix Day Hospital since June 1998 and was well known to Dr Code A She had reviewed at Alverstoke House prior to admission where he was presenting with low mood, especially in the evenings and with disturbed nights sleep. He expressed feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness regarding his future but denied any suicidal thoughts. He was commenced on Sertraline 50mgs mane but his mood decreased."

G Sertraline does what?

A Sertraline is an antidepressant.

Q The note continues:

"Alverstoke House found him difficult to manage. He was therefore transferred to Mulberry Ward A ward for assessment."

H

A A Mulberry Ward A. Mulberry Ward was split into A and B. A being the functional unit.

Q Underneath, we see "Diagnosis:

"(1) Parkinson's disease + dementia.

B (2) Depressive episode

(3) Mylodysplasia."

A Mylodysplasia is a function of blood and bone marrow, where you have poor production of some blood cells. I believe that was – I would have to look – platelets and white cells.

C Q "PROGRESS AND TREATMENT

PSYCHOLOGICAL – he was low in mood and irritable on admission he was very distressed by his lack of mobility and independence as his Parkinson's disease worsened. He was reviewed by Dr Lord ... for his Parkinson's medication. His sertraline was stopped and he was commenced on mirtazapine."

D A Mirtazapine is another antidepressant.

Q Then:

"His behaviour at times was very difficult and he was often rude to the nurses. He was very demanding of the nurses' time and preoccupied with his medication regime. Carbamazepine was introduced."

E Physical – he had regular reviews by Dr Lord for his Parkinson's."

Parkinson's was not something that you would be directly dealing with.

A No, generally not.

F Q Do you recall this admission to Mulberry Ward?

A I recall some of it. It is just that it is not as clear as Mr Pittock, who I had known very well.

Q Just dealing with this admission to Mulberry Ward, if we go to page 72, I think we will find a note of yours. Again, I am not going to spend very long on this. Do we see an entry for 24 July.

G A Yes.

Q Is that you?

A That is me writing, yes.

Q You can hopefully read it to us.

H A I can. It says:

A "Seen on ward. Depressed. Tearful. Talks about wife and alienation from step children. Irritable. Difficulties with placement. Start mirtazepine 30 mgs at night."

The asterisk is to say:

"Check full blood count next week and weekly."

B Given his myelodysplasia, I felt it was important that we kept an eye on that.

Q If we leaf through the following pages, again I am not going to alight on any of them for very long, the following page records an incident on 25 July at 2300 hours:

"Had got himself out of his chair and crawled on all fours to his bedroom, did not want to sit in a chair, would not use frame to walk or attempt to weight bear."

C Was he quite a difficult patient?

A He was not an easy man, I think, for the nurses to manage.

Q At the bottom of the page:

D "Brian managed to attend to this own personal hygiene. He became quite rude and abusive to a member of staff early am. Spoken to Brian about his rudeness did apologies to member of staff ..."

At this stage were his mental faculties there, as it were, or impaired? How would you put it?

E A I cannot comment on whether his faculties in terms of his memory and that level of functioning and self-awareness were totally there. I really cannot comment. I would say that clearly he had periods where he was frustrated and his behaviour was difficult, but behaviour and having your faculties do not always match.

Q We can all be rude.

F A We can all be rude, but I cannot tell you whether this man was just always rude or his behaviour was part and parcel of his psychological make-up, his mental state, him being depressed. He had Parkinson's, which he found difficult because it made him dependent on other people. With Parkinson's you do get fluctuating physical states because of medication. Having seen the notes and from my personal recollection of this man, it would be difficult to say it was either one or the other and more likely to be a combination of his person and his illnesses.

Q Can we skip on, please, to page 88. I am obviously dealing on only with very short aspects of this statement. We see a note that may be by Dr Taylor on 19 August 1998: "Discussed with Dr Banks ..."

G A Yes.

Q I think this revolved around the problem that Mr Cunningham was agitated and unsettled at night.

H A Yes. Also, there is a comment about having hallucinations and being paranoid as well, and risperidone is an antipsychotic medication and would be used for the treatment of hallucinations and paranoid delusions.

A Q Finally in relation to this submission, could we go to page 93. Does your writing appear on this page?

A No.

Q This is asking you to help us with the history of this patient. Right at the end, we can see that he was due for discharge to the Thalassa Nursing Home. He was quite anxious and fluids were encouraged. Urinary output good. If he was fit enough to discharge to the

B Thalassa Nursing Home, does that tell us anything about his state of health?

A It would suggest that the challenges for the nursing homes had been his behaviour, which could well have been part and parcel of his low mood, and that behaviour must have been settled enough for him to move back into a nursing home environment.

Q I should have taken you to this earlier, but right at the beginning of his admission, I think you had written a note?

C A Yes.

Q It is page 116.

A Yes. I have to confess, I am somewhat embarrassed by this note because I did not read it, and it was dictated and signed without me seeing it, and it is not the sort of language I would normally use.

D Q I was going to ask you.

A Because that is not what I would normally send out.

Q Very well.

A Clearly, given the tone of the letter, things had not been easy.

Q No. But that, of course, was prior to his admission?

E A That was prior to the admission.

Q And when you refer – and I am sorry if it slightly embarrasses you ---

A That is all right.

Q --- but when you refer to a patient as being “a bit of a saga”?

F A Yes. I think it was the whole... My recollection was that Mr Code A had somehow managed to come from one nursing home, probably another nursing home, and he was not settling. I think he had actually turned up just with the social worker hoping, I think I am correct in saying, that the situation would be resolved. I believe that is what led to his admission.

Q Then he gets through with the admission?

G A Uh-huh.

Q Which we have looked at?

A Yes.

Q He is released back, as it were, to the Thalassa. Could we go to page 100, this was cc'd to you.

H A From Code A

A Q The psychiatric nurse?
A Correct.

Q
B “Mr Cunningham has settled well into Thalassa Nursing Home. There have been no real management or behavioural problems. He can be awkward at times but mostly he is pleasant and compliant. His mood seems good. I plan to review him in one month.”

We know that in fact, I think three days later he was actually transferred to Dryad. The reason for that we find at page 458. That is that unfortunately he developed a large necrotic sacral ulcer. This was cc'd to you again, as we can see at the bottom.

A Yes.

C Q We can see from the third line:

“His Parkinson's disease doesn't seem any worse and mentally he was less depressed but continues to be very frail.”

He was really being admitted for treatment for his sacral ulcer.

A Correct.

D Q Can we take it that you had no further dealing with him?
A I had no further dealing with Mr Cunningham.

MR KARK: Thank you very much. Will you wait there, please.

Cross-examined by MR JENKINS

E Q I am going to ask you questions on behalf of Dr Barton. Can I just ask about Parkinson's disease and whether it is a disease that can itself lead to death?
A Yes.

Q If a patient were to die – a patient who had Parkinson's disease – what would be the mode of death? Would they be bed-bound?

F A Certainly bed-bound, yes. With Parkinson's disease it is a fairly prolonged chronic disease, very debilitating, gradually deteriorating and, in general, people become entirely bed-bound and entirely dependent for activities of daily living on nurses and other carers who may be looking after them. There may be difficulty with eating and drinking because of problems with swallowing and may spend many months or years in bed prior to this happening.

G Q If someone did develop bedsores, as we know Mr Cunningham did in the nursing home before he was sent into hospital at the War Memorial, are there likely to be difficulties in dealing with the pressure sores because of inadequate nutrition because of the Parkinson's, or might there be such problems?

A I would imagine there are going to be enormous problems treating bedsores. They are very difficult to treat. It is a very lengthy process and, in addition, if you have someone who could be bed-bound then, as a matter of turning them, keeping them off the sacral area, I have

H

A to confess I am no expert in managing bedsores, but it would strike me that that is a very difficult... Sorry. Can you just repeat the question. I have got lost on my....

Q I was just asking about inadequate nutrition.

A Sorry.

B Q Problems because of the Parkinson's, whether that was likely or whether it could lead to problems in dealing with the bedsores?

A The Parkinson's, purely by the consequences of physical immobility, the stiffness, difficulty moving someone, is going to make it difficult, and someone would need regular turning and it would take a very long time – months if not years – to treat that sort of level of bed sore. In terms of maintaining nutrition, that is going to be very difficult because someone would have difficulties in swallowing and taking adequate nutrition and may lose weight. That would not be uncommon for someone to lose weight with Parkinson's.

C Q We have seen through the correspondence that you have been referred to that Mr Cunningham had lost quite a lot of weight?

A Correct.

Q In the correspondence we have seen the consultant was remarking on that?

A Uh-huh.

D Q Yes?

A Sorry. Yes.

Q Can I ask you about a creatinine figure?

A Yes.

E Q You shudder! If you prefer me not to, I will not.

A Try me out!

Q You have been referred to page 465.

A Yes.

F Q The creatinine is over 301.

Q Yes.

A And his urea of 28.

Q Tell us what creatinine is?

A Oh, goodness me! Creatinine is a chemical in the bloodstream that reflects renal function.

G Q Right. If creatinine is significantly elevated?

A That suggests poor renal function.

Q I understand. Renal – relating to the kidneys?

A Sorry. Kidney function. Thank you.

H

- A Q I am not going to ask you what a normal range would be for a male or a female unless you know?
A No, but it is less than that. Just over 100 or something along that.
- Q Yes, that is very significantly elevated, 301?
A Yes.
- B Q And is an indicator of poor renal function?
A Correct.
- Q Put the notes away now. I am not going to ask you any more questions about that. I am going to ask you about your knowledge of Jane Barton.
A Okay.
- C Q What the Panel know, I think, is that she took up a clinical assistant's job at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in about 1988. Did you know her before that time?
A 1988? Sorry, I am just trying to think and place myself in time. Our paths may have crossed but I cannot think that I actually knew her before 1988.
- Q I think it is right that you will have shared patients?
A Yes, we will have shared patients.
- D Q At the War Memorial Hospital?
A At the War Memorial Hospital.
- Q And would you have had discussions or contacts with Dr Barton about patients who were treated at the War Memorial Hospital?
A Yes.
- E Q When you were both working there?
A Correct. We would have done.
- Q And have you also, as a consultant, dealt with patients of Dr Barton's for whom she was the general practitioner?
A Correct. I would have done that as well.
- F Q And in that role would you have seen referrals by Dr Barton?
A Yes, I would.
- Q And possibly have had discussions over the telephone or face to face about patients?
A I think fairly regular discussions with Dr Barton. I did a clinic in her surgery and regularly met Dr Barton and other GPs of that practice every month.
- G Q Although you cannot give us the year when you first came across her, have you had sufficient time to form a view of her skills and abilities as a doctor?
A Yes.
- Q Tell us what you think of her?
A My opinion is that Dr Barton has always been a really very accomplished doctor. She has in terms of managing her patients always for my service made very timely referrals, very
- H

A appropriate referrals. She has asked pertinent questions about intervention and care. Like any consultant/GP interface there was always discussion about what would be an appropriate course of action. I know that I have had discussions with Dr Barton on occasion when we did not always see eye to eye, but she has changed her views, changed her opinion, and we worked on together with patients, but in a very positive fashion. Certainly, within her practice she was the most psychologically minded and able of the GPs.

B Q Tell us what you mean by "psychologically minded"?

A Able to see that people had a psychological component to illness, and understood people as individuals rather than, I suppose, just bodies to do something to. She was very aware of people as individuals. She was quick to pick up on depression and was generally timely with interventions. In terms of our interface at Gosport War Memorial we shared many patients, even before the move to Dryad on Redclyffe Ward, which then became my continuing care unit. The referrals made by Dr Barton to myself on Dryad or Redclyffe ward – I cannot think of an inappropriate referral. Obviously it is difficult to search the total memory bank, but I cannot recall anything that was not appropriate for my assessment or my intervention, or for my team's intervention. We worked very hard on some really challenging cases. She was very pro-active at getting people home and certainly Dr Barton was very supportive of those management plans on Dryad ward. I think we achieved very many successful discharges home, or to residential or nursing home care.

D Q Perhaps it is time for a question.

A Sorry. Yes. Does that ---

Q It is all right. What would you say about her level of commitment towards patient care?

A She was phenomenally committed. She was always in there first thing, even before me, so she was in there first thing and I knew that I could catch her first thing in the morning when I arrived. If there were problems, all the nurses had to do was to call her, and I knew that she would turn up. So if I had a problem with somebody, or we had agreed to meet she would come in. She was very committed to providing the care on Dryad ward.

E

MR JENKINS: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: It means we have come to the stage when members of the Panel may have questions of you. I will look to see if any do. Yes. Dr Roger Smith is a medical member of the Panel.

F

Questioned by THE PANEL

DR SMITH: I am a physician. Can we go back to creatinine.

A Ah!

G

Q Your reaction was...

A Yes, go on. It still is.

Q It is not a viva.

A No.

H

Q Just a flavour, if you would.

- A A Okay, fine.
- Q Because Mr Jenkins did bring it up.
- A Yes.
- Q A level of 301 is raised?
- A It is raised. He also has a raised urea, has he not, of 28.
- B Q Can you think of any reasons why a creatinine may be higher than it normally is in a patient?
- A He could be dehydrated.
- Q Any other reasons?
- A Some renal impairment. Probably medications.
- C Q Could infection cause it to be high?
- A Okay. Infection – I am sure you are right.
- Q So a creatinine of 301 may be a temporary thing. It may get better than that.
- A Okay.
- D Q Would you agree with that? In some cases, a raised creatinine may go down with some treatment of some conditions?
- A Correct.
- Q And, secondly, is a level of creatinine of 300 something that you would equate with near death?
- A No.
- E Q No? Anywhere near death?
- A Do you know, I just do not quite know actually so I would prefer to say I would not be one hundred per cent certain.
- Q I only ask these questions because the rest of the Panel are lay.
- A No, sure. That is very reasonable.
- F Q That is very helpful. In a similar vein this gentleman had pretty bad bedsores, sacral sores?
- A Correct.
- Q From immobility from Parkinson's disease. A month before that he had not been as ill. You had felt he was well enough to go back to a rest home, a nursing home. Again, with Parkinson's and immobility, the fact that you develop bedsores: what in your opinion would that equate to? Is that a situation which may be easily remediable in some people?
- G A I am sorry. The thoughts that go through my mind are that he is spending a lot of time in bed, and either not moving or not being moved.
- Q But may the situation improve under certain circumstances?
- H A Improved nursing care could improve it.

A Q And ---
A I am sorry. I am not quite....

Q Okay. We will leave it there because that is sufficient for the question I am asking. With Parkinson's, may immobility sometimes improve as well?

A Yes.

B Q Sorry – mobility improve.
A Mobility can improve.

Q In general terms, then, faced with a patient with a known background like this man, who develops a sacral sore and immobility and a raised creatinine – I am sorry, it does sound like a viva and I do not mean it to be.

A It is like a viva.

C Q I am very sorry. Speaking as a physician – you speaking as a physician – what would be the general principles of management of his physical problems if you are faced with a man on your doorstep like that?

A Let us make an assessment to start with, if there is any underlying cause for this, or deterioration. Then it is about management of his Parkinson's, his bed sore and his mobility.

D Q So it is "make an assessment"?
A Yes.

Q Get to know the patient?
A Yes.

E Q Their problems, and see if there is a way through?
A Correct.

Q Having said all that, is it reasonable to sum up that you would not – let me put the word "necessarily" in if you like – you would not necessarily think that this was an end of life situation?

A It is bedsores, Parkinson's and poor mobility and a creatinine of 301 paint part of a picture, do they not? Part of the assessment is to get the whole picture. I do not know what the rest of the whole picture is or was. I know his mood is good.

F Q Let me crystallise it into this then. In such a situation there is potentially for improvement?
A Uh-huh.

G Q Yes?
A Yes. Sorry, sorry. Yes.

Q But there is also potential for no improvement or, indeed, deterioration?
A Correct.

DR SMITH: It is something you need to assess. Thank you very much.

H

A THE CHAIRMAN: Doctor, I am not a medical member, as will probably become apparent. We have heard a great deal about getting the whole picture and, of course, a lot of that has to do with when you take that picture.

A Yes.

B Q We have heard a great deal about deterioration. We have heard a great deal about the effects that different medications can have on physical and mental status, and their ability to sometimes mask what one might call a true picture.

A Uh-hum.

Q Indeed, you have told us today about the effect of medication that can be had with a patient suffering from Parkinson's. You indicated there was a fluctuation in their physical status.

A Yes.

C Q We have also heard a great deal of evidence from others about the effect that a transfer can have on a patient, both physically and mentally, and not necessarily a transfer between hospitals; even a transfer between wards.

A Yes.

D Q In the whole business of assessing the true picture, can you give us any assistance in broad terms, appreciating that every patient is an individual, of what one should be looking at in terms of the passage of time between the moment of arrival after transfer, before you can be making the sort of assessment that is going to have an impact on your decisions in terms of the long-term for the patient?

A Okay. As you rightly say, each person is very individual and not specifically talking about the two patients we are talking about today, I suppose assessment can be very short. If someone comes in, you may have known them from the past, you have known them from the day hospital, and it is very clear that they have deteriorated significantly and that assessment takes place very quickly. It may be that the underlying reasons for the deterioration are crystal clear and you can make decisions there and then. Generally it takes a bit longer than that and it may be several days. For some people, if I think about Mr Pittock, who was transferred from a residential home, for it to be crystal clear to us what was happening took a week to be clear whether he was going to get better and improve or not, for example. For some people, it takes longer than that. It is dependent on the rest home, the nursing home, the information you receive from them, the information you receive from families, how they respond to the new environment, whether they feel confident and comfortable in that environment to appreciate the process of assessment and if you have a patient who readily engages with that assessment process, then again it is so much the quicker. Does that help you?

G Q That assists greatly, but just in respect of the last point, of course lack of engagement or otherwise may itself be a feature of, shall we call it the transfer effect.

A Correct.

Q So it is a matter of building in margins of safety, I guess. At which point might it become safe? I appreciate that initial assessment is vital, but that is merely for your immediate management of a patient, is it not?

A Correct, yes.

H

A Q But suppose it is a ward where, for example, there is routinely a decision that will be made for patients whom it is assessed are coming into that end of life stage and they may be put on to a course of treatment that of necessity is a one-way street and a short street at that. What I am looking for is any guidance that you can give us as to the sort of timescale on average that one would expect to elapse before that sort of decision is made to ensure that there is no great risk of a patient being put into that final phase when in fact some of the symptoms of deterioration that they are manifesting are either as a result of the transfer mode or indeed fluctuations that may occur because of the use of certain medications or simply the side effects that might occur as a result of the use of certain medications. Maybe there is not a guideline that you can give us, but if you can, it would help me enormously.

B A I am just taking a little time to think out an answer, because clearly if it was an easy answer, you would be there a long time ago. I think if you are embarking on a course of treatment, then clearly that has to be well thought through and whatever the course of treatment, it needs clear thought given as to why you are undertaking that treatment and what it is for. I think the timeframe to embark on these, as you have alluded to before, is very much about individual patient decisions, rather than a timeframe by which every patient is treated, because that would be very non-personalised, would it not, and you would feel you were just were not valued as an individual. To be honest, I really could not give you a timeframe in which you make these decisions, but when someone comes into hospital, you do have to make a decision about their treatment plan. Often prior to admission, there would have been some treatment plan alluded to. For example, for Mr Pittock and Mr Cunningham, Dr Lord had already come – I am sorry, not Mr Cunningham. I beg his pardon. For Mr Pittock, Dr Lord had already come up with a treatment plan which was for us to use on Mulberry and I would imagine that would continue to be used on Dryad ward. So there are treatment plans that should be set up at the beginning and may precede a patient into hospital. But embarking on – I forget the words you used to describe it – a one-way street of treatment, which suggests a sort of an end point that is terminal, those decisions are not I would say something that you make instantly when someone comes into hospital, unless there was good reason to do so. I cannot define “unless there is good reason to do so”, but it may be that there are circumstances where that may be the case.

C

D

E

F Q Would it follow that if the patient were to be admitted on to the ward on the basis of pre-planning which indicated, for example, that the patient was for rehabilitation, those sorts of circumstances would make it on the face of it inconsistent, if there were a rapid assessment culminating in that patient being put on to a course of treatment that completely contradicted that for which they came in, for example, rehabilitation they are coming in for, but very swiftly being put on to an end of life course of treatment that would only have one outcome.

A It sounds far too straightforward to say yes, you would surmise that would be the right outcome, that if you are coming in for rehab, you are not put on sort of end of life pathway unless circumstances have changed.

G THE CHAIRMAN: That is very helpful. I appreciate those were very difficult questions to try to answer, but it certainly assists me as a non-medic. We have reached the point now where the Panel have asked their questions and it is open to the advocates themselves to ask questions which arise out of the questions asked by the Panel. I am going to ask Mr Jenkins if he has any questions arising.

H

A

Further cross-examined by MR JENKINS

Q Coming back to Mr Cunningham, if you would. You checked yourself. You said Mr Pittock had been assessed by Dr Lord and you stopped yourself from saying that Mr Cunningham had been as well. If you look at page ---

A You are right. I beg your pardon. You are absolutely correct. I did not mean to contradict myself.

B

Q --- 644. When Mr Kark asked you questions, he stopped the chronology on 18 September and told you that three days later, Mr Cunningham was to be admitted to the War Memorial Hospital.

A Yes.

C

Q What we know is that on 21 September, he was assessed at the Dolphin Day Hospital, which is part of the War Memorial complex, assessed by Dr Lord and we have her assessment there. At the bottom of page 644, we have six numbered points. To the left of the number 1, we have a triangle, which is medial shorthand for "diagnosis".

A Yes.

D

Q I do not think I need to take you through them, but it is clear that Dr Lord has written up a plan. That is the first word she has written on the next page, page 645, and she sets out five numbered points. Again, the detail of them perhaps does not matter. She is suggesting that Oramorph should be prescribed as required, if he is in pain. She has assessed the extent of the pressure sore on the previous page and at the end of her note, she has written, "Prognosis poor".

A Yes.

E

Q We can turn over two pages to page 647, where we will see that Dr Barton, underneath a photograph of the sacral sore, has made an entry that Mr Cunningham is to be transferred to Dryad ward.

A Yes.

F

Q In those circumstances, would you expect the clinical assistant to pay high regard to the plan drawn up by the consultant arranging for the admission?

A Yes. If it were my clinical assistant, I would expect them to follow the plan.

G

Q You were asked questions by the Panel about pathways that patients might be placed on and you were asked if, say, a patient was admitted to the ward for rehabilitation, whether rehabilitation is what they should get by way of treatment.

A Yes.

Q We have to assume for these purposes that rehabilitation is realistic as a basis for admitting a patient to the ward, rather than something written on a piece of paper.

A Correct.

H

Q Any doctor, on seeing a patient, either at the time of admission or just after, would you expect them to undertake an assessment both of the history and of the patient's then condition. Yes?

A Yes.

A Q You were asked questions about pathways for patients. Do you really need to assess the patient yourself in order to be able to decide what is appropriate for this patient at this point in time?

A Sorry, when you say "you", are you talking about ---

Q For you or for anyone to make a decision appropriate for this patient, do you need to be able to review not just the history, but the present position?

B A I think what I replied to the Chairman was that if there was an intention to rehabilitate, then you would assume that someone would be going into the unit to be rehabilitated, but situations change and I very clearly said that. That is the plan, but when someone gets to the ward, that is not always how the situation is. Does that answer your question?

C Q It does mostly. The way in which one might know that the situation had changed is because the doctor and/or nursing staff are continuously assessing the patient.

A Yes. You make an assessment, which I think I said should be taking place.

MR JENKINS: Thank you.

Re-examined by MR KARK

D Q I have only one matter to ask you about. I just wanted to try and follow what you just said. I am not going to ask you about creatinine.

A No, please do not ask me about creatinine!

Q Still with Mr Cunningham, page 645 of file G, is that the plan set out by Dr Lord for this patient?

A I believe that to be correct.

E Q Then you said – I just tried to note it quickly: "I would expect a clinical assistant to pay high regard to the plan set out by the consultant."

A What you are saying is, I am contradicting myself, I think.

Q No, I am not suggesting anything.

F A All I am saying is that if, as a consultant, you make a plan for a patient you have seen in the community and then they are admitted to a ward, a clinical assistant or a junior doctor, you would expect them to follow the plan. But part of the junior doctor's role or the clinical assistant's role is to make an assessment of that patient when they come into hospital. If there is a significant difference, then you have to look and change the plan. You cannot stick with the plan regardless.

G Q I entirely understand that. If there is a significant difference between what you read as the consultant's plan and what your assessment of the patient is, would you in normal circumstances make any note about that?

A I would expect my junior doctor to make a note about that. What you are saying is, if I thought there was going to be a significant difference ---

H Q If you read a consultant's plan for a particular patient, the patient gets wheeled round to you and you take a look at that patient and think, "Hold on. This is an end of life patient", would you make a note about that and the reasons for your decision?

A A I would expect my junior doctor to do that. If I am the consultant and I make a plan and then, when the patient gets wheeled round to my junior doctor for admission, they think, "What's up here? Things are not quite what they seem to be", I would expect them to think about the plan and either contact me or do something about it and not necessarily follow the plan.

B Q This patient on page 645 who is being assessed on 21 September is where?
A From what I understand, this person is in Dolphin Day Hospital, having come in from the nursing home. When Dr Barton has written her comment, I cannot tell you.

Q I think it is accepted that when Dr Barton saw the patient, the patient was still in Dolphin Day. That is what is being suggested.

MR JENKINS: Mr Kark knows what Dr Barton said to the police.

C MR KARK: Let us imagine that for the moment. The patient has not even been moved yet. The patient is still lying in the same ward where the consultant has just assessed him. The consultant has suggested that the patient is for a high protein diet and Oramorph if in pain. You, as the clinical assistant, go and see that same patient and you make a decision at that time to put the patient on a syringe driver on that day, on 21 September. Is that something you would communicate to the consultant?

D A Generally. I have slightly lost track of where you have gone with your thinking and your position.

Q It is your evidence that matters, not my thinking.
A It is how the evidence has been presented.

E Q If we go to page 758, which is the drug record, on 21 September, the same date as that assessment by Dr Lord, this patient is put on a syringe driver by Dr Barton.
A Okay.

Q Would you expect Dr Barton to communicate that to Dr Lord why her assessment was seemingly rather different?
A I am sorry, I am just looking for (Pause)

F MR JENKINS: I am sorry to interrupt, but I wonder if it would be fair for Dr Barton if Mr Kark were to take the witness through the history of what happened that day. We can start at page 754.

MR KARK: I am sorry, I am simply picking up on the examination by Mr Jenkins. He was asking this witness questions and the witness said, "I would expect a clinical assistant to pay high regard to the plan drawn up by the consultant." That is all that I was asking about.

G A Yes. I am sorry, I got slightly sidetracked. I did not quite hear everything you were talking about, and it sounded like you were talking to yourself and Dr Barton and not to me.

Q No, I am asking you questions.
A I thought you were having another discussion.

H

A Q I am sorry. That is my fault. I am asking you questions. I was asking you if the clinical assistant comes to a different view, first of all would you expect them to make a note about it or not?

A I would expect if they come to a different decision that there is some recording and some discussion.

B Q And the discussion would be with whom?

A With either a senior doctor or myself.

MR KARK: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Kark.

C Thank you, doctor, very much indeed. That completes your testimony. We are extremely grateful to you for coming to assist us today. It is always very difficult for a panel in these sorts of situations to try to get a true picture of what happened, very often months and, indeed, years ago, and we really do rely upon witnesses such as yourself coming to assist us. In that regard, you really have been of great assistance and you go with our thanks. Thank you.

(The witness withdrew)

D MR KARK: That is the last live evidence that we have. We might finally make an attempt at some reading this afternoon. I wonder if the Panel might like a short break. There is about 30 minutes of reading to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will take a short break. We will return at 25 minutes past the hour.

E (After a short break)

THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back everyone.

F MR KARK: Sir, could we start with some housekeeping. The first piece of paper we want to give you is the death certificate for Gladys Richards which we have not had until now. At file E there is an empty tab, and perhaps that could be filed there. We are not going to give it a different C number. (Documents distributed and inserted in bundle E)

THE CHAIRMAN: For the record, the Panel have received the death certificate in the case of Patient Gladys Richards and we have added it to the patient bundle behind the appropriate tab.

G MR KARK: Thank you very much. There is also one for Mrs Eva Page, bundle E. (Documents distributed and inserted in bundle E) There is a document after the death certificate which is the birth certificate. The reason for that is that the death certificate appears to reveal the wrong date of birth by a day. It was 29 December 1909 and it is shown in the death certificate as 28 December. I do not expect much turns on it, but that is why you have a copy of both.

H THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Both of those documents have been received by the Panel and placed into bundle C behind the appropriate tab.

A MR KARK: I am now going to read the statement of Sharon Barbara Ring, which is a statement read by agreement, I believe.

MR LANGDALE: Yes.

B MR KARK: This is the statement of Sharon Barbara Ring.

STATEMENTS OF SHARON RING, READ

She describes herself as a care manager in social services. She made a number of statements to the police, the first of which is dated 10 November 2005. She says,

C "I am currently employed as a care manager in relation to social and home care for the elderly at Fareham Social Services.

I was an E grade staff nurse in the NHS."

She gives her nursing and midwifery number.

D I have just realised that we do not have a copy for the stenographer. I am sorry, and we will provide one post event, as it were.

THE CHAIRMAN: Whilst you have interrupted yourself, can I just confirm that this statement has been admitted on the basis that the defence are content for you to read it but they do not accept the contents as being fair.

E MR KARK: Sir, I think this one is accepted.

MR LANGDALE: Sir, I think in this case there is no difficulty about the content. I do not think any issue is taken with what I understand is going to be an edited version simply to cut out irrelevancies.

THE CHAIRMAN: That which we hear is accepted by the defence as being undisputed fact. Thank you.

F MR LANGDALE: It is not a matter of contention.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR KARK: She says,

G "Between May 1976 and May 1979 I trained as a student nurse. I worked at both St Mary's Hospital and the Royal Hospital in Portsmouth."

She says that she qualified as a State Registered Nurse in May 1979 and that she worked on a female geriatric ward. She deals with her midwifery training in 1981.

H

A “During the period 1983 to 1986 I worked part time as a staff nurse on night duty at both Thalassa and Bury Lodge Nursing Homes for the elderly in Gosport. I initially worked two nights per week.”

She then speaks about running her own business between 1986 and 1990. She came back to nursing in 1991.

B I am skipping parts. I know my learned friend and I have agreed, but I think he will agree that we can précis this. She says:

“In September 1991 I rejoined the NHS as a D grade Registered General Nurse (RGN) working part time at the Redcliffe Annexe in the Avenue, Gosport. This was a long stay unit for the elderly (patients over the age of 65 years). I have re-registered with the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting.

C In my time at the Redcliffe Annexe I was working with ...”

and she names Sue Donne, Lynn Barratt and Gill Hamblin, who she describes as the Ward Manager.

D “As a D Grade I was a junior Staff Nurse and as such I always worked with a Senior Staff Nurse.

I received no training in the use of IV drugs and I did not administer these.

I do not recall the term the Wessex Protocols.

E With regards to the use of a syringe driver, I am aware that it can only be used on the authority of a prescription written by a Doctor. The use of which is only authorised after discussions amongst the medical team and the nursing staff have reviewed the patient’s pain relief/control and the analgesic ladder had been followed; ie, beginning with simple paracetamol, distalgesics, co-dydramol, a codeine based analgesic, and then morphiates would be the next consideration.

F Once the authority for a syringe driver was given; ie, it was written on the prescription chart and normally in the clinical notes, there should also be an entry in the nursing notes which would state what controlled drugs were to be administered to a patient and what quantity and dosage. The period of time the dosage was to be administered was usually over a 24 hour period.

G These drugs would be taken from the secure drugs cupboard after the amount/dosage of the drug was checked against the prescription sheet. The appropriate amount withdrawn would be then recorded in the controlled drugs book, which should be witnessed by the two nurses who had withdrawn the drugs.

H The drug solution containing the prescribed drug(s) was made up in sterilised water.

A In the case where it was a mixture of drugs, then the compatibility of drugs would be checked in the British National Formulary (BNF). On occasions the pharmacist would be contacted for advice.

Once satisfied that the drugs compatibility was correct then the driver would be taken to the patient, where a further check would be made to ensure it was the correct patient.

B A small butterfly needle would have been inserted below skin level (subcutaneous) and the syringe driver applied, which delivers a set quantity of drugs over a 24-hour period.

With regard to training it was purely on a one-to-one basis and on the job learning. We were given handouts and there may have been a course, I am unsure.

C My understanding of the term the named nurse is that this person is responsible for the care of the patients allocated to them. The relatives of that patient would also speak to them if the named nurse was on duty.

The time and date of all entries would vary from patient to patient; they may be completed at the time, but normally completed at the end of the shift.

D My shifts were from 0730 to 1330 and from 1230 to 2100 hours.

The Redcliffe Annexe closed and all patients and staff transferred to a new ward at Gosport War Memorial Hospital known as Dryad Ward. At this time I was an E Grade Staff Nurse.

E My responsibilities at this time were deputising in the absence of the senior staff nurse or ward manager, supervising staff and delegating work loads. Also assessing, implementing and evaluating individual patient's care. Further to this I would accompany doctors and consultants on their ward rounds. I would also order drugs and arrange for their safe storage and then dispense safely to the patients.

F The ward rounds were completed before surgery by the GPs, usually between 0730 and 0800 hours. These would consist of a meeting between them and the staff and opinions from us sought and the GP would visit the patient if necessary.

The consultants rounds would usually be once a week and would take all morning, and all patients would be visited by them.

G The following terms can be written in the nursing notes.

ANC means All Nursing Care and means all care that is required for the individual patient, in relation to care plans such as Hygiene, Nutrition etc.

TLC means Tender Loving Care, which in my opinion indicates that the patient is in the terminal stages of life and should be treated with dignity and respect.

H

A 'I am happy for staff to verify death', would be written by a Doctor and means that the patient is expected to die in the near future. To verify death then two trained members of staff would check the patient for vital signs, (there was a policy to follow for this) and as such the eyes would be checked for pupil reaction, along with the pulse and the heart. The patient may also be pinched to see if pain registers.

B I have been asked about Shirley Hallmann, a nurse at GWMH, expressing her concerns regarding syringe drivers to me. I cannot recall any conversation with Shirley regarding this topic at all.

I was on Dryad ward from September 1997 to October 1998 and in that time I believe I worked with Shirley Hallmann for approximately 6 months before I left.

C If there had been any such conversation with Shirley I think I would have documented this and spoken to other members of staff. I don't recall doing either of these."

She then makes a statement dealing primarily with Patient A, Mr Pittock. It is dated 25 October 2004. She repeats, frankly, a vast amount of the same material. Then she says – and for my learned friends I am now on page 4, half way down:

D "I have been asked to detail my involvement in the case and treatment of patient Leslie Pittock."

He is now Patient A. She refers to a photocopy of the nursing notes. She confirms that she has written the following entry for 21 January 1996. I am going to give the references for the purposes of the transcript. If you want to look them up then, of course, I will pause but she actually reveals what she says in her notes in any event. It is our page 212 of Patient A. She says:

E "I can confirm that I have written the following entry for the 21/1/1996 (21/01/96).

Condition remains unchanged, Mrs Pittock phoned, driver recharged at 1745
Diamorphine 120mgs, Midazolam 80mgs, Hyoscine 1200 micro grams, Nozinan 100
mgs, one syringe running at 50mms per 24 hours the other at 58 mms..."

F That must be "mls", I think.

"... appears comfortable."

It actually says "mm" which is millimetres but I am not sure that makes sense.

G "This entry has been signed by me."

She says:

"Firstly I do not recollect this patient Mr Pittock or remember the subsequent care given.

H

A With regards to the above entry the patient's condition has not changed during my shift. Mrs Pittock has phoned because she is obviously aware that Mr Pittock is very poorly, ie, prognosis is poor.

The syringe driver has been set up and commenced prior to my shift. I have recharged the syringe driver as per the prescription chart written by Doctor Barton clearly shows that this dosage and mixture of drugs can be administered to the patient.

B However if as trained nurses we felt that the amount of drugs was no longer required, ie, there were signs of improvement then I would not administer these drugs. I would firstly phone the doctor on duty for advice.

C In my experience contacting a doctor for advice in these circumstances was a rare experience.

With reference to the different rates that I have recorded – both syringe drivers were set to run over a 24 hour period.

With reference to where I have written 'appears comfortable' I understand this to mean that there were no obvious signs of pain or discomfort.

D I have written under the initial entry on page 29..."

for us it is page 212 –

"2015 no change in condition – which is self explanatory.

E To summarise the patient Mr Pittock at this stage was obviously very poorly, the family were aware of his condition. That during my shift the patient's condition had not changed."

She then talks about witnessing withdrawals from the drugs record which I think we both agree we do not need to go through.

F I then turn to her statement dated 11 January 2005. This is for Patient Lake, and that is your file F, so we are dealing with Ruby Lake. She again reveals her training. She says that when she was at the Redclyffe Annexe she was a D grade as a junior staff. This is just addition to the preface that she gave in the first statement. She says:

G "During this initial period that I was working at the Redcliffe Annex I updated my knowledge concerning nursing and healthcare by reading the Nursing Standard and Nursing Times.

Although I know I received training in connection with the use of syringe drivers I cannot remember the dates or where this training took place. However I would not have been allowed to use or set up a syringe driver without the appropriate training.

H I cannot specifically remember using syringe drivers at the Redcliffe Annex."

A Can I just look to my learned friends and see if they want page 3, which is in different wording, but I think is much the same sort of material. I am sorry. Yes. I am going to move on. I will give my learned friends an opportunity of having a look at that if they want any of it. I am obviously very happy to read it, but I am going to move on. Thank you. Page 4. There she says:

B “I have been asked to detail my involvement with the patient Ruby Lake ... who was admitted to Dryad Ward on 18/08/1998.

I do not remember the patient Ruby Lake or any treatment administered to this lady.”

She looks at the drug charts. For us it would be page 368E. She says:

C “I did not administer any drugs to Ruby Lake on the 19/08/1998. I believe I was off duty that day. I can confirm that I have made one entry for 3 drugs dated 20/08/1998 @ 0915 where I recorded that I have administered 20 mgs of Diamorphine, 20mgs of Midazolam and 400 mcg of Hyoscine.

These drugs and their quantities were prescribed by Dr Barton who was the ward doctor for Dryad Ward at that time.

D On examining the nursing summary, page 394 ..., I would have checked the patient notes for the previous day where it was noted that the patient Ruby Lake was anxious and in pain, a syringe driver had subsequently been commenced.

On the 20/08/1998 there would have been a verbal handover from the night duty staff informing myself and other staff commencing duty that day how each patient had progressed during the night.

E In the case of Ruby Lake it appeared that her condition was deteriorating and that she was still in pain.

The dosage for Diamorphine and Midazolam remained the same. However 400mcgs of Hyoscine was introduced into the syringe driver at this time.

F I can confirm that I wrote the following entry...”

This is our page 394.

“.... on 20/8/1998 (12.08.1998) at 1215, condition appears to have deteriorated over night. Driver recharged, 1010 – Diamorphine 20mgs, Midazolam 20mgs, Hyoscine 400mcgs. Family informed of condition, daughter present at time of report.”

G I am just asking Mr Fitzgerald to check something.

H “With regards to this entry it would appear that I have phoned the family to inform them of Mrs Lake’s deterioration in health. I would have almost certainly informed them at the same time that I had administered another drug (in this case Hyoscine) and explained to the family the reason why another drug had been introduced.”

A It was just slightly confusing. The note is made at 1215 but the note that the driver was recharged does show that it was recharged at 1010. She says:

Hyoscine is normally administered to a patient when they produce excessive excretions, eg, saliva and phlegm and they find it difficult to clear these secretions.

B Hyoscine helps to reduce excess secretions. It also acts as an antiemetic, ie, it reduces the feeling of nausea.

It is worth noting that a common side effect of Diamorphine when administered is nausea.

I am unable to state when these drugs were prescribed by Dr Barton as there is no date to indicate when the entry was made on the prescription chart.

C I must add that prior to administering the Hyoscine the dosage would be discussed between myself and the other trained nurse where it would be decided to administer what we felt was appropriate within the prescribed guidelines as set out by Dr Barton.

D My understanding with regards to any controlled drug which was to be prescribed to a patient would be recorded on the prescription drug chart and recorded in the Drs notes by the prescribing doctor. Firstly I would only check the drug chart when administering drugs.

I did not as a matter of course check the entries made by the prescribing doctor in the doctors notes. In the case where it was a doctors signature that I didn't recognise then I would check the doctors notes.

E I have checked the doctors notes in relation to the patient Ruby Lake and cannot find any reference to drugs or the reason for prescribing drugs within the doctors notes."

Those you would find at page 78.

"These drugs would only have been prescribed if Dr Barton felt it was appropriate to do so.

F The normal procedure for disposing of unused syringe driver controlled drugs was that they would be disposed of by two trained nursing staff. This procedure is done when it is felt that the dosage needs to be increased or amended prior to the syringe driver finishing within that 24 hr period.

G The same applies when a patient dies prior to the syringe driver finishing."

She talks about being shown the drug register book but in fact we are trying to stay with our prescription charts, and the relevant document would be 368E. She says:

"... I can confirm that I have made the following entry [in the drug register book]:

20/8/1998 (20.08/1998) 0915, Ruby Lake, 20mg...

H

A This entry shows that I have administered the drug, that it was witnessed by S/N [Staff Nurse] Shaw ...

I have made no other entries ...

...

B I can confirm that I withdrew the drug Diamorphine out from the dangerous drugs cupboard at 0915 which is verified by my entry ...

.... I have shown that the syringe driver containing the Diamorphine, Midazolam and Hyoscine was recharged at 1010, 20/8/98 (20/08/1998).

C I cannot recollect the reason for the delay between withdrawing at 0915 and administering at 1010 ... There are numerous distractions on the ward especially as I was senior nurse in charge.

I am inclined to say that it is possible that the time recorded in the nursing notes is incorrect and that I actually administered it at 0915."

D She then deals with her entry at page 395 on 21 August 1998 at 1855:

"... condition continued to deteriorate slowly, all care continued. Family present all afternoon and present when Ruby passed away at 1825.

This entry is self explanatory...".

E She also deals with the note that she makes about the patient dying which perhaps I do not need to go through.

Patient G: again, there is a lot of preamble which I am not going to deal with. I am turning now to page 3 of 5.

"I have been asked today about entries in the medical records of Arthur Cunningham ..."

F This is our file G. She makes reference to page 831.

"The three entries dated 26th September 1998 were written by me.

Dr Barton wrote the prescription on the form of Diamorphine, Hyoscine and Midazolam.

G All three of these drugs were put into the syringe driver by me.

The syringe driver was already in place and I would have recharged it for twenty four hours over the 26th September, through to the 27th.

H

A A syringe driver is a mechanical device normally placed in the stomach. It is battery powered and functions as a device to administer a regular dose of pain relief over a twenty four hour period.

By this date I was an E Grade RGN, a Senior Staff Nurse and was fully trained in the use of syringe drivers.

B I can say by reading page 831 that Dr Barton prescribed for Mr Cunningham parameters of 40 to 200mg of Diamorphine, 800 micrograms to 2g Hyoscine ...”

I do not think it can be that much –

“ .. and 20 to 200mg of Midazolam, all to be given over a twenty-four hour period.

C I can say that at 1150 hrs on 26th September 1998 I mixed 80mg of Diamorphine, mixed with water, 1,200 micrograms of Hyoscine and 100mg of Midazolam. They were all compatible to go into a syringe driver.

This was all in accordance with standard medical practice.

D As a Senior Staff Nurse I would stand in for the Ward Manager or the more Senior Staff Nurse above me in the ward. I was in effect in charge of the running of the ward and this would include the administration of medication to patients.

Each of the above entries was initialled by me.”

E Then she confirms the notes made by her on 25 and 26 September at page 863. I will deal simply with that made on 26 September, if I may. The rest speak for themselves in any event:

““Condition appears to be deteriorating slowly. All care given. Sacral sore redressed. Mouth care given. Driver recharged at 1150. Diamorphine 80mg, Hyoscine 1200 micrograms, Midazolam 100mgs. No phone call from the family this am. Mrs Code A phoned to enquire on condition.”

F All medication given to Mr Cunningham was within those parameters set by Dr Barton.”

Then she says this:

G “Any increases in the administration of medication would be discussed between the doctor, if available, and the senior nurse. If the doctor was not available the decision, based on staff experience and qualifications, as well as the patient’s condition, would be determined by the two trained staff on duty.”

She describes again how to use a syringe driver. Then:

“Further to the above I can confirm that the notes referred to by me ...”

H She is referring to the recharging of the syringe driver, which we have just dealt with –

A

"I have also been asked why the diamorphine was increased to 80mg on 26/9/98 and who made the decision to increase the dosage. I assume the increased dosage was because of increased pain and the decision would normally have been the doctors, although if the doctor were not available two trained members of staff who knew the patient could have made the decision, provided it was within prescribed parameters, which it was. This increase would have been over a twenty four period and is not excessive."

B

That deals with the statement of Sharon Ring.

MR FITZGERALD: Sir, lastly two statements from Ingrid Dawn Lloyd dealing with patient G, Arthur Cunningham. This I think – I will be corrected if I am wrong – is a statement that is being read on the basis that it is accepted the witness is unavailable and the statement could be read, but it is not agreed evidence.

C

MR JENKINS: I confirm that.

MR FITZGERALD: Dealing with Patient G, firstly the statement of 18 October 2005, Ingrid Lloyd sets out her background:

D

STATEMENT OF INGRID DAWN LLOYD, Read

"Between 1989 and 1992 I did my Nurse training at St Mary's Hospital Paddington and at Southbank Polytechnic London where I completed by Registered Nurse and HND Nursing training."

E

She then goes through her employment after that, saying:

"Between 1996 and 1999 I was a night Staff Nurse D Grade on Dryad ward at Gosport War Memorial Hospital where I was in charge of the ward in the absence of a senior member of staff.

F

.... my responsibilities included the administration of drugs, patient care and supervising patient care.

My line manager at the time was Gill Hamblin.

I did not receive training/certification in the administration of IV drugs.

G

I received mandatory training in the community regarding the setting up of syringe drivers; I believe this was at the Countess of Mountbatten Hospital. I received no certificate.

I have not heard of the term, the Wessex Protocols. I do however have a good knowledge of the analgesic ladder regarding pain relief.

H

The named nurse is a term that is not used on night duty, but it is the nurse who is responsible for the planning, administering and implementing a patient's care plans."

A

She says:

“The term TLC, ‘tender loving care’ I am familiar with. This would indicate to me that this patient was getting towards the end of their life, and there was likely to be no rescue efforts to resuscitate them.

B

The term ‘I am happy for staff to verify death’ I am familiar with, and understand it to mean that death was expected, and that there would be no need for a doctor to be called out during the night if the patient passed away. In a larger hospital this would not occur because there would always be a doctor on duty. GWMH is basically a half way house between a larger hospital and a patient’s home.

Ward rounds were not conducted during a night duty.

C

I have been asked to detail my involvement in the care and treatment of a patient on Dryad ward named Arthur Brian Cunningham ... I have no recollection of this patient ... but I can state that on page 756 of the nursing notes which is a form ‘Exceptions to Prescribed Orders’ I have written ...”

This is page 756 of the nursing notes –

D

“ ... at 2200 on 21/9/98 that Co-Proxamol, Sinemet CR and Senna were not given, the reason being that the patient was sedated. This means that the Co-Proxamol was not given because the patient was sedated on the syringe driver and the Sinemet and Senna would to be appropriate also due to sedation.

E

On page 758 of the notes is a prescription chart written up by Dr Barton. This was for a variable dose (20-200mg) of Diamorphine and a variable dose (20-80mg) of Midazolam. I have written on 21/9/98 at 2310hrs that I have administered 20mgs of Diamorphine and 20mgs of Midazolam ... I would think that I set up the syringe driver, but Fiona [Walker] and I would have given it together.

F

On page 861 of the notes which is a patient summary regarding Mr Cunningham, I have written on 21/9/98, ‘Remained agitated until approx 2030. Syringe driver commenced as requested. Diamorphine 20mgs, Midazolam 20mgs at 2300. Peaceful following.’ I have signed this entry.

Diamorphine used in a syringe driver is a faster way of relieving pain than drugs taken orally. The syringe driver administers drugs subcutaneously ... and may be used if the patient is comatose, or absorption of oral drugs was impossible i.e. if the patient had difficulty swallowing, or if the patient had a slow metabolism.

G

In my experience, and with regard to recent research based evidence I have read, Diamorphine in a syringe driver is an excellent method of pain relief. In a variable dose prescribed of between 20 to 200mgs, the 20mgs administered was the lowest possible dose that could be given over a 24 hour period.

H

Midazolam is a sedative.

A Sinemet is used for Parkinson's.

Senna is a laxative.

The exceptions to prescribed orders was documented at 2200 on 21/9/98 in full expectation that a syringe driver was to be commenced at the earliest opportunity consisting of both Diamorphine and Midazolam which would negate the need for the other analgesic."

B

That is the end of her first statement. She has then made a supplementary statement dated 30 November 2005, in which she says:

"I have been asked to clarify the following points: with regard to the syringe driver my entry of the 21/9/98 ..."

C

This is the note on page 861 –

" ... with regard to the syringe driver my entry of the 21/9/98 is followed by an entry dated 22/9/98 made by Shirley Hallman. However this is a retrospective entry. I was aware from the verbal handover which took place at about 2015 hours on 21/9/98 that the incidents that are mentioned in Shirley Hallman's note had already taken place. It was with this knowledge that together with Shirley Hallman it was agreed that a syringe driver should commence. This was done so that Mr Cunningham remained in a pain free and peaceful state.

D

Although I have stated in the notes that Mr Cunningham was peaceful at 2030 hours it was not certain he would remain in this state. The syringe driver was not commenced until 2310 hours as it required two nurses and Fiona Walker wasn't available until this time as she had other duties to attend to as the night nurse in charge.

E

The purpose of the syringe driver was to enable a pain free and peaceful state for Mr Cunningham. With regard to who authorised the syringe driver this was a decision made by three trained nurses including myself, Shirley and Fiona. The drugs were prescribed to be given at our discretion.

F

The term 'as requested' would suggest that I had had a conversation with another member of staff, possibly Shirley Hallman, however as I do not recall this I can't make further comment.

I wish to clarify the issue with regard to the Co-proxamol. In my previous statement I have said it was not given because the patient was sedated on a syringe driver. This is not correct. Firstly Mr Cunningham was not sedated. The reason the Co-proxamol was not given was because I was acting with the full expectation that a syringe driver was to be commenced at the earliest opportunity."

G

That is the end of those statements.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed. We are almost within the time, but not quite. Thank you.

H

A MR KARK: Just in terms of progress, we are I think very much on track on the reviewed the timetable. Tomorrow morning, we have Mr [Code A], who is an orthopaedic consultant. I do not think he will be very long. We then have Dr Reid, and I expect that he will be a relatively lengthy witness. He may finish tomorrow, he may not. Then on Wednesday we have Dr Tandy and Dr Ravindrane, Mr [Code A], who is one of the managers now at the Trust, and [Code A] about whom we have heard. Then on Thursday we hope to start with Professor Ford. As I flagged up last week, that will slightly depend on us having had the expert's report. If we have not had the expert's report in good time, we will have to ask for an adjournment.

B MR LANGDALE: Sir, may I just indicate one thing which may slightly affect that timetable? You may recall some time ago, I think it was you who asked, as a result of comments made by us, about the two sides getting together to try and produce a kind of comprehensive chronology and history.

C A lot of work has been done on that I know by Mr Fitzgerald and Mr Jenkins has been kind enough to work through it. Whether we absolutely reach a final agreed version – it is not a question of dispute about facts; it may be a question of disagreement as to quite what goes in it in terms of how full it should be – but I can see we may be asking perhaps for half a day just to make sure that is straight, because I personally think very strongly, and I think Mr Kark agrees, that for the Panel's assistance as well as for our assistance, when listening to Professor Ford's evidence, it is going to be pretty useful to have a history set out. It may prevent the Panel having to constantly look at entries.

D It is bound to happen. Professor Ford is bound to have to look at entries on the individual files but I think in the long run it may save time. I just mention that as a possibility. We are doing our best to see that it is all settled before we get to Professor Ford.

E THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Langdale. Anything that can be done to make things smooth and easy for the Panel is always going to be very welcome.

We will rise now and we will meet tomorrow at 9.30 am.

(Adjourned until Tuesday 30 June 2009 at 9.30 am)

F

G

H

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL**FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL (SERIOUS PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT)**

Tuesday 30 June 2009

Code A

Chairman: Mr Andrew Reid, LLB JP

Panel Members: Ms Joy Julien
Mrs Pamela Mansell
Mr William Payne
Dr Roger Smith

Legal Assessor: Mr Francis Chamberlain

CASE OF:

BARTON, Jane Ann

(DAY SIXTEEN)

MR TOM KARK of counsel and MR BEN FITZGERALD of counsel, instructed by Field Fisher Waterhouse, Solicitors, appeared on behalf of the General Medical Council.

MR TIMOTHY LANGDALE QC and MR ALAN JENKINS of counsel, instructed by the Medical Defence Union, appeared on behalf of Dr Barton, who was present.

(Transcript of the shorthand notes of Code A & Co Ltd.
Tel No: Code A)

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A THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning everybody. Mr Kark, a quick bit of housekeeping, if I may. This Friday a member of the Panel needs to be away by about 3.30 in the afternoon. If there is any danger of that impacting negatively on the schedule, then the Panel would be perfectly prepared to sit longer hours in the run up to, and I will be guided by you as to when and if that is required.

B MR KARK: First of all, I am sure in terms of overall impact that is not going to have a significant effect at all. It is a timely point at which to mention next week and Professor Ford. Today we have a fairly full schedule. Mr Fitzgerald is going to be calling the first witness Mr Redfern, and I may slip out of the room at that time while that is done. Then we are going to be hearing from Dr Reid. Dr Reid is a fairly substantial witness. You will recall that he was one of the consultants. Then tomorrow we may still have Dr Reid to finish. I do not know how long we will be with him. Then we have got Dr Tandy and others. Now, so far as Thursday is concerned, we certainly may start Professor Ford on Thursday, but you have heard Mr Langdale's suggestion, which I fully support. Mr Fitzgerald has done a huge amount of work on the chronologies and the defence are going through those at the moment. They have done some of them but not all of them, and are adding some details, I think, to those they have seen. Next week we have one, as I understand it, non-sitting day, which is Wednesday, because we are being moved out of here because it is required, I think, for a Council meeting. Then I ought to mention that Thursday, my current instructions are that Professor Ford is not available. He has some prior commitment. I have known about that for some time and perhaps I should have revealed that earlier. I am sure there will be other things that we can do and read, but we are losing two days in the middle of next week. Professor Ford is available, I think, until Monday the 13th. So we have got Friday, Monday and Tuesday of next week, Friday the following week and Monday the week after that, so we have got five full days to deal with Professor Ford's evidence, and, although he is a very substantial witness, I am reasonably confident that we will be able to finish in that period.

E MR LANGDALE: May I just mention one other thing which may affect the order of events. At some stage before Professor Ford gives his evidence my learned friend I know is going to put in evidence the statements made by Dr Barton, which include a general statement of her position and individual statements with regard to each one of the patients. I am not suggesting that he calls a policeman, or whoever received the statements, to read them all out, but it is going to be very important for the Panel, before hearing Professor Ford, to have in mind the content of Dr Barton's statements, because, apart from anything else, I shall be putting certain matters from them to him. He, of course, has read them all, but I just think we ought to allow, in terms of the timetabling, for that to take place. It is not a matter of a half hour read.

G THE CHAIRMAN: You are absolutely right, Mr Langdale. One of the unusual features of this case so far has been that we have not had the sort of gaps that often occur and which enable a Panel to keep up with its reading. I know there is a general feeling that we would welcome some reading time, just keeping up with the transcripts themselves. Normally, Mr Kark, it has to be said that GMC scheduling is not as efficient as yours has been, and your team are to be congratulated on that because you have kept it coming with no real gaps.

MR KARK: Well, perhaps there is advantage to inefficiency sometimes.

H THE CHAIRMAN: Sometimes.

A MR KARK: One of our difficulties is that because we have known of Professor Ford's time slots, as it were, we have had to keep things moving to get to the point where we can call him. Thereafter, I suspect, we can if necessary slow down a little because we still have a long time before the scheduled end of the case, but we will just have to deal with Professor Ford as best we can. I entirely accept Mr Langdale's point. You will need, I would suspect, at least half a day realistically reading Dr Barton's statements.

B THE CHAIRMAN: It sound as though towards the end of this week that time is going to be available to us. Even if we were to start the Professor a little later, at least we would be properly prepared for him, and I think Mr Langdale is absolutely right, we need to be in a state of readiness or else the first wave washes over us and we have not really taken it on board in the way we should, if I can mix the metaphor.

MR KARK: I accept that.

C THE CHAIRMAN: Good. Thank you. So, Mr Fitzgerald, you have a witness.

MR FITZGERALD: Sir, I do. Just before he is called, could I hand out, please, copies of the revised chronology for Patient I, Enid Spurgin, which is the patient the next witness deals with. (Same handed)

D THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Fitzgerald, we will just add these to the patient bundle without the need to give it a separate exhibit number. It will simply go in at the beginning of the bundle.

MR FITZGERALD: Thank you. This is the revised and agreed version which sets out almost all, if not all, of the relevant entries from the notes.

E THE CHAIRMAN: I can see you really have done a great deal of work and we are most grateful for that. Thank you.

F MR FITZGERALD: Certainly, sir. The next witness is Daniel Redfern, who is a consultant orthopaedic surgeon, who reviewed the notes relating to Enid Spurgin and provided an opinion. He did not deal with her himself. What I was going to suggest is that maybe the most efficient way of dealing with this is for he and I, and therefore the Panel, to go through this document briefly when he is called and familiarise the Panel with it in that way, rather than giving time at the outset for the Panel to just review it.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are in your hands absolutely.

G MR FITZGERALD: Thank you very much. Could I just explain something about the chronologies in terms of the colour coding. The colour coding has only been used in terms of the drugs prescribed and administered. For example, if one looks at page 12 at the top, one can see that there is an entry on page 12 relating to Oramorph and co-dydramol. Entries in red relate to prescriptions and entries in blue relate to drugs administered. So that is designed to be helpful. Could I call then, please, Mr Daniel Redfern.

H

A

DANIEL REDFERN, Sworn
Examined by MR FITZGERALD

B (Following introductions by the chairman)

Q Is your name Daniel Redfern?

A It is.

Q Is it Mr Redfern?

A Mr Redfern.

C

Q You are a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the Royal Preston Hospital?

A I am.

Q You have been in that post since 1999, is that right?

A Yes.

D

Q Just a little more about your background: you qualified originally from Oriel College, Oxford, is that right, in 1980?

A Yes.

Q Where did you do your further medical training, please?

A St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College in London until 1988.

E

Q What qualification do you hold, please?

A An MA, MBBS, FRCS and the FRCS Orthopaedics.

Q So a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons for Orthopaedics?

A Yes, two Fellowships: one is the standard Fellowship, and then there is the intercollegiate Fellowship, which is taken at the end of training.

F

Q You did your basic surgical training at St Mary's Hospital in London?

A Yes.

Q Then moved on for higher surgical training to the Hammersmith and Charing Cross Hospitals?

A I did.

G

Q Then, as you say, you have been a consultant surgeon, orthopaedic surgeon, in Preston from 1999?

A Yes.

Q Is it right, Mr Redfern, that you were asked in 2006 by the Hampshire Police to provide an expert report into the care provided, from an orthopaedic point of view, in relation to Enid Spurgin?

H

A Yes.

A

Q You produced a report dated 22 January 2006, having been provided with the medical records and reviewed them, is that right?

A Yes.

Q Would you find it helpful in giving your evidence to the Panel to be able to refer to your report?

B

A Yes.

MR JENKINS: There is no objection.

MR FITZGERALD: Sir, I am sure that for large parts of Mr Redfern's evidence he will not need to do that, but there may very well be points where it would be helpful, so I am grateful for that.

C

THE CHAIRMAN: In the absence of objection from the defence I see no difficulty with that.

MR FITZGERALD: Thank you. Mr Redfern, you have also been provided this morning with a chronology, have you not, about what happened in relation to Enid Spurgin?

A Yes.

D

Q Have you had some time to look through that?

A I have.

Q For your benefit the Panel also have that, and what we will do in a moment is just to go through it to look at the relevant entries from your point of view.

A Okay.

E

Q You were asked in 2006 to consider a number of different issues, some of which are relevant for us and some of which less so, but so the Panel are clear on the exercise that you have performed were you asked to address, first of all, whether or not Enid Spurgin suffered after her admission to the Haslar Hospital in this case from something called compartment syndrome?

A I was.

F

Q As a result of the operation that took place to her fractured neck of femur?

A Yes.

Q That was an issue that really related to her treatment at the Haslar Hospital?

A Yes.

G

Q Could you just help the Panel immediately with what compartment syndrome is?

A Compartment syndrome is a condition which arises most commonly after trauma or surgery. The segments of a limb are bound within a tight containing structure called fascia, which binds the soft tissues and the bones together under the skin. If you develop swelling within that tight fascia, then the pressure within that area builds. If the pressure builds sufficiently, then the return of blood from that segment of the body is obstructed. As a consequence, the blood coming in is also secondarily obstructed at the point of the micro circulation, which is where the blood vessels become very small. If that happens, then the tissues in that area lose their oxygen supply and the cells will swell. This worsens the

H

A problem because it increases the pressure in the compartment. If left untreated this condition can lead to muscle and nerve death within the compartment and loss of function in the limb, or compartment of the limb. I hope that is reasonably clear.

Q I suspect it is. You make your point in your report in terms of why this really is an issue that is more relevant to the treatment at the Haslar Hospital. This is something that would arise in reasonably short order after an operation?

B A Either after trauma or after an operation, yes.

Q And so for the Panel's benefit, it is not such an issue when we come to her treatment at the second hospital, the Gosport War Memorial Hospital?

A The issue would have been only the sequelae of a compartment syndrome rather than the diagnosis of the compartment syndrome itself.

C Q Very well. By that point the damage from compartment syndrome is done?

A Is done.

Q Also for the Panel's benefit, I think it is right to say that from your analysis of the notes, you are unable to say that this patient did have compartment syndrome but it was a possible diagnosis?

A Yes.

D Q You were also asked, though, to consider other issues. Firstly whether in your view it would have been reasonable to expect a doctor – one of the doctors who were treating this lady – to refer her for further orthopaedic review after her operation in the light of the symptoms that she showed?

A Yes. I was.

E Q You were asked to comment on the possibility that the pain that Mrs Spurgin suffered was due to any reversible post-operative complication?

A Yes.

Q And you were also asked to comment on the antibiotics that were used to treat Mrs Spurgin and whether they were sufficient in your view?

A Yes.

F Q Those are issues which are relevant to both hospitals but certainly relevant to the treatment at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. When you were looking at the records of Mrs Spurgin to inform you in making your report, is it right that you were concerned particularly to see, first of all, the details of the operation she went through and then also signs of further pain, discomfort, swelling – matters of that nature – after the operation?

A Yes.

G Q What I will ask you if we can do is to go through this chronology now, to just look at the relevant points. There may be one or two moments while I just ask for your comments and refer you to your report. To run through the most relevant points from the chronology, we can see from the first page and the first entry that it was on 19 March 1999 that Mrs Spurgin was admitted to the Royal Haslar Hospital following a fall. It caused a right subtrochanteric femur fracture.

H

A We know, moving on to page 3 – do you have page 3 of the chronology?

A Yes.

Q At the top of page 3 we see that surgery was carried out. This was the next day, the 20th, under spinal anaesthetic with the insertion of a right dynamic hip screw. There was a blood transfusion that was given. Then there was a post-operative review that day by a senior house officer that there was a lot of ooze from the wound, that the thigh was about two times the size of the left thigh, and there was an issue of whether there was a haematoma, and the patient was complaining of discomfort in the leg and pain on palpation. I think you made a point in your report, that it was quite a complicated fracture and quite a complicated operation that this lady underwent?

A Do you wish me to expand?

Q Please, yes.

A In the scheme of fractures around the neck of the femur, which is the hip, the subtrochanteric fracture is probably the most difficult of the three sub-types to deal with. It is difficult to reduce. It is difficult to fix and the fixation has a higher propensity to fail than standard fractures.

Q This may be relevant to the point we will come onto, but when you say “a propensity to fail,” what does “fail” mean in this context?

A Failure would usually involve some breakdown in the interface between the implant and the bone, so that the plate may pull away from the side of the bone to which it is fixed. May I stand up?

Q Yes, if you are more comfortable, I am sure. (The witness did so)

A It is fixed down the side of the femur here (indicating) and then there is a screw that passes up into the hip bone itself, so the plate can either pull off in *this* direction (indicating), or alternatively the screw can cut out through the femur superiorally, going towards the head. So those are the two commonest modes of failure. (The witness sat down)

Q So literally the fixation between the bones is ---

A It either pulls away from the bone, or it cuts through the bone.

Q That will have inevitable consequences in terms of pain and mobility?

A Yes.

Q Moving on, we can see that on this day – the day of the surgery, at the bottom of the page – paracetamol was administered and also morphine for pain relief?

A Yes.

Q Unsurprising on the day of operation?

A Perfectly standard.

Q Moving over to page 4, it is now 21 March. The first entry deals with the morning: “Seen by doctor today” – the X-ray was checked and was okay.

“Mrs Spurgin able now to get into chair. Please give morphine before moving Mrs Spurgin – a lot of pain on movement.”

A We can see at the bottom of the page that again morphine was being administered that day. Again, this is the day after surgery. Would that level of pain be unusual?

A That would not be unusual.

Q You make a point in your report about the reference to an X-ray being checked and being okay. First of all, in terms of the fixation, in terms of the surgery, what does that reference tell us about at that stage?

B A It states that the doctor reviewing the X-ray was satisfied both with the position of the implant construct on the bone and also with the position that the bone had been put into, which is termed its reduction. So the bone had been satisfactorily straightened and fixed.

Q You make a point in your report about this being on your analysis of the notes, the only reference to an X-ray actually being checked in relation to this patient?

C A Yes. There were no X-ray reports and I did not have the opportunity of reviewing any X-rays personally.

Q The Panel will know that there is later at Gosport War Memorial Hospital a request by a Dr Reid for another X-ray to take place, but on your analysis of the notes that does not seem to have been followed up. Is that right?

A I could not find a record of that X-ray having been taken or reviewed.

D Q Moving on with the notes, in the middle of that page, page 4, I would just point out that the last three lines of that entry say that the right hip is painful +++, no ooze, but thigh enlarged, possible bleed into thigh but no evidence of hypovolaemia. The hip was still painful but that was not very surprising given how recent the operation was?

A It is not surprising. If you read the contents of my report, I was concerned that the issue of compartment syndrome was raised but not acted upon.

E Q This is relevant to the criticism that arose in your report of the treatment at the Haslar?
A Yes.

Q That this should have put people in mind of ---?

A Compartment syndrome.

Q Very well. Particularly in light of the pain and the swelling that was occurring?

F A Yes, and in the light that one doctor had actually made that diagnosis.

Q Yes. That is a note that has not been included in the chronology because it is not so relevant from our point of view but it features in the notes from the Haslar. Moving on to page 5, the next day, 22 March 1999, in the middle of the page, the second entry:

“Sat out by physios. Drinking and eating much better today. Oral fluids pushed.”

G And it is paracetamol that is being administered that day.

The next page, 23 March, a couple of lines down, a.m. –

“Moved patient to chair with 2 assistances. Patient has difficulty and pain ++ with mobility.”

H

A Then the last couple of lines at 19.53:

“Transferral and mobilising not well. No ooze on wound on hip.”

Still it is just paracetamol being administered.

B We move on over the page to the next day, the 24th. There is a review by Dr Reid, consultant, who also saw the patient at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Dr Reid pointed out:

“Main problem was pain in right hip and swelling of right thigh. Even a limited range of passive movement in right hip still very painful.”

C He wanted to be reassured that all was well from an orthopaedic viewpoint. He was saying if it was, he was happy for transfer to take place to the second hospital.

If we move on over the page, again just paracetamol that day that was being administered. The next day, the 25th, there is a note on the ward round that the right leg had increased swelling, the skin was fragile. A haematoma had developed and broken down.

D Go over the page, please, to the top of the page. This is the last day the patient was at the Haslar Hospital. From the nursing notes, the patient was mobilised to the commode with two staff. The last line there is that she was very reluctant to mobilise. “Needs encouragement.” Still just paracetamol being given though.

Then it was the next day, the 26th, that we can see that the transferral took place to Dryad Ward at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. There is a note in the transfer letter there saying that the patient was now –

E “... mobile from bed to chair with 2 nurses and can walk short distances with a zimmer frame.”

It also pointed out that the right lower leg was very swollen and there was a small break in the skin. The only medication is analgesia PRN. On the 26th she was transferred.

F Going over the page to page 10, that day three was a review by Dr Barton. Dr Barton noted effectively she was not weight bearing, and that there was a plan to sort out analgesia. In the second entry on that page from the nursing notes, it is pointed out that transfer had been difficult since admission.

“Complained of a lot of pain for which she is receiving Oramorph regularly now, with effect.”

G The legs are swollen. The last few entries relate to the night time:

“Requires much assistance with mobility at moment due to pain/discomfort. Oramorph ... given...”

H Over the page:

A “Oramorph given for pain in hip
Experiencing a lot of pain on movement”

We can see from the entries relating to the drugs that were given that there were four doses of Oramorph given that day.

B Over the page to page 12, the 27th, Oramorph continued and also co-dydramol prescribed and the nursing notes states:

“Is having regular Oramorph but still in pain.
... In some pain, needs 2 nurses to transfer at present.”

The next day, the 28th, Oramorph and co-dydramol both given. Moving through the next few pages quite quickly, page 13 on the 29th March, co-dydramol only given.

C On the 30th, over the page to page 14, again co-dydramol given. In the nursing care plan it is observed that both wounds are redressed.

“Steri-strips from surgery removed. One small area near top oozing slightly...”

D The next day, the 31st, Oramorph given again, a small dose and co-dydramol and MST – so slow release morphine – then prescribed for the first time and two doses administered.

We go over the page to page 15. At the top there is a nursing entry that the patient was now commenced on the MST.

“Walked with the physiotherapist this a.m. but in a lot of pain.”

E The next day, 1st April, the second entry is from the nursing care plan. There was a wound in the right hip oozing large amounts of serous fluid and some blood, and a hole was noted in the wound. Still having pain on movement.

You made a comment in your report about what this sort of oozing of serous fluid might indicate. Can you help us with that, please?

F A I will just refer to my report.

Q It is page 11 of your report, just a few lines down from the top.

A Sorry – just to check. Leaking from a wound at this time following surgery would suggest that there was either a clot that had formed within the leg – and I differentiate this from a venous thrombosis. It is a different kind of thing. This is a post-surgical collection of blood. What happens is that over the course of a number of days after surgery it will liquefy, and then it will drain through if there is a patency in the wound. The alternative is that there was an infection on the implant and that this was discharge from that infection.

G Q You have described that as a potential deep infection?

A Deep infection.

Q Because not just on the surface of the wound but actually inside?

H A Inside, presumably right down to the level of the implant.

A Q Just moving on, it was the most that was given that day, on 1 April. Then going over the page to page 16 on the 2nd, the next day, again MST given, and on the 3rd. There is a nursing entry for the 3rd, that the patient was still continuing to complain of pain on movement. Then on the 4th, there is a nursing entry that the wound on the right hip was oozing serous fluid and blood, as before, it would seem. MST was again administered.

B Going over the page to the 5th, again MST administered. Then the next day, the 6th, there was a review by Dr Barton. That entry in itself is not particularly relevant to us, other than that the MST dose was increased to 20 mg. The next entry relates to swabs being taken from the suture line on the right hip and the right calf. Then there is a microbiology report coming back. The fact that swabs were taken would indicate that that was action being taken in respect of the potential infection. Is that right?

A Yes. It would suggest that there was suspicion of an infection.

C Q The microbiology report is our page 57. It might be helpful to look at it briefly. Next to you there are a number of files on your left. Can you take out the file marked "I" – which is different from the file marked "1".

A Yes.

D Q Would you turn to page 57. The pagination that we are using is the one at the very bottom of the page with a dash either side. That is the microbiology report. That seems to have been the result of these swabs being taken. Does that seem to make sense to you?

A That would fit. Date received, 6th of the 4th.

Q So that would fit?

A Yes.

E Q Date reported, 9th of the 4th. Does that mean the date that this report was actually made?

A The date that the microbiologist made the report was the 9th of the 4th.

Q Can you help us with the infection that was found? You made a point in your report about whether this would be considered a particularly serious or dangerous infection.

A There are two organisms. May I just check my report on that?

F Q Of course.

A One is staphylococcus aureus and one is staphylococcus epidermidis. Staphylococcus aureus is a typical pathogen for causing wound infection. Staphylococcus epidermidis is usually a skin commensal, as the name suggests, on the epidermis. A commensal is an organism that lives ordinarily on the surface of the skin without causing problems. It is of theoretical importance in orthopaedic implants, but here, no sensitivities have been given for it. The sensitivities for staphylococcus are typical: flucloxacillin, erythromycin and, quite surprisingly, penicillin, because staphylococcus aureus is not usually sensitive.

G Q In fact, when you reviewed the issue of whether the treatment for infection that was given at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital and whether the drugs that were used were satisfactory from your point of view, your conclusion was that it may not have been the perfect solution, but that it was satisfactory from your point of view; it was not something you would criticise. So we may not need to go into that.

H

A A I am sorry, this is why I was looking through my report. I think they commenced on ciprofloxacin, metronidazole, which is a reasonable best guess, because the patient was incontinent of urine, although not of faeces as far as I am aware. So it was a reasonable best guess.

B Q If we go over the page in our chronology to page 18, we can see these drugs being commenced. On page 18, the first entry there is the drugs that were given on the 6th, but on the 7th we can see there is an entry that the fracture site was red and inflamed, she was seen by Dr Barton and that those two antibiotic drugs were commenced: metronidazole and ciprofloxacin.

A Yes.

C Q Ultimately, when you were giving your opinion on the prescription of those antibiotics, it was your view that that was a satisfactory approach?

A I think I also said, however, that the antibiotics should have been changed on receipt of the report.

Q Can you help us with why that is?

D A The organism staphylococcus aureus is not sensitive at all to metronidazole. The antibiotic ciprofloxacin is a broad spectrum antibiotic which is less effective against staphylococcus aureus than antibiotics such as flucloxacillin and erythromycin, both of which are very good anti-staphylococcal agents.

Q We have seen that the report was only made on the 9th.

A Yes.

E Q Just moving on to finish the relevant entries from the chronology, on the 7th, the last entry is a review by Dr Reid. That is the consultant who had seen the patient prior to her transfer to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, and his entry was that the patient was still in a lot of pain and very apprehensive. He has said:

“For x-ray Right hip as movement still quite painful – also, about 2" shortening Right leg.”

F You referred to this earlier in your evidence in relation to there being a further request for an x-ray. You dealt with this at page 10 of your report. From the note about the movement still being painful and the shortening of the right leg, what concerns would that raise?

A My concern would be, given that picture, that the implant had failed.

G Q Is the level of pain that the patient had been in which was registered in the notes and which seemed to be continuing after the operation and in the second hospital, and the difficulties in mobilisation, would that be normal if the fixation was working properly?

A In a sound fixation and in the absence of other complications, you would expect the analgesic requirement to diminish and the ability to mobilise to improve steadily until an end point is reached.

Q So what concerns would have been raised by continuing pain and lack of mobilisation?

H A In the first few days after surgery, there was the concern of a compartment syndrome causing pain in the thigh. Compartment syndrome is a very painful condition. After 48 to 72

A hours, the pain of compartment syndrome recedes and the likelihood of that being a reasonable cause for her pain recedes at that point. From then on, really at no time does she demonstrate improvement in terms of her general levels of pain as far as I can establish. There is a brief period while she is at Gosport when her analgesic requirements come down to a paracetamol requirement, but it is always documented in the case records that it is painful for her to mobilise.

B Q What concerns does that raise?

A That would worry me that the implant fixation was not adequate.

Q Is this entry by Dr Reid about the shortening of the right leg further evidence of that?

A It is quite strong evidence of that. The hip should not be short by that degree. That is about 5 centimetres. That is a long way short.

C Q By this stage, some two or so weeks or a little bit more after the operation that this patient underwent, would it be common or uncommon for the patient still to be requiring morphine?

A That would be very uncommon in my experience in the context of an adequate fixation.

D Q Moving over the page in the chronology, on page 19 we can see that on that day, when the review by Dr Reid took place, again MST was given and on the 8th MST was given again. He records:

“Wound oozing slightly overnight. Redness at edges of wound subsiding.”

On the 9th, MST was given again and it was recorded by the nurses:

E “To remain on bed rest until Dr Reid sees the x-ray of hip.”

As you said before, I think there is no sign in the notes that that x-ray was done or reviewed by anyone.

A I could not find a record of the x-ray having been taken. It would be logged initially in the x-ray department, but there was certainly no report.

F Q Over the page to page 20, on the 10th MST was given again and in the nursing notes it is recorded:

“Very poor night. Appears to be leaning to left ... Stitch line inflamed and hard area. [Complaining of] pain on movement and around stitch line. Oramorph 5 mg given at 07.15 hrs.”

G For the Panel's benefit, I should point out now that that 0715 entry would in fact be on the next morning. If it is helpful to write that in, it would in fact be on the morning of the 11th, because this is an overnight entry. Then moving on to 11 April, in the first entry there is another reference to pain on movement and Oramorph being given at 0715. She was complaining of tenderness around the wound, there is a review by Dr Barton, it seems, a reference to the condition of the patient deteriorating and:

H “The patient denies pain when left alone, but complaining when moved at all.”

A Then there is a note there that the patient may be commenced on a syringe driver and that is what took place the following day. I think for our purposes at the moment, those are the relevant notes we need to look at. As we have gone through, we have already commented on a number of the significant points, but if I could just move on to the opinion that you express having looked at the records. I think it is right to say that when you set out your view in your report, you have made some points about ways in which you were hampered initially and it is right to say that you felt you were hampered by not having had sight of any relevant radiographs of radiologist's reports. So x-ray reports.

B A Or preferably x-rays.

Q Or x-rays themselves. But you did of course take account of the fact that there was the initial reference to the x-rays being okay and then the fact that later at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, although there was reference to the fact that an x-ray should be carried out, there was then no further reference to it.

C A Yes.

Q You also felt limited in what you could say because of the fact that there was no post mortem examination.

A Yes.

D Q Therefore is it right that in looking at what the diagnostic possibilities were, you could only give possibilities, rather than firm conclusions.

A A range of possibilities.

Q But you were able at page 14 to set out what in your view that range of diagnostic possibilities was. There are three I think. Can you just help us with what those were?

E A They were an untreated compartment syndrome, a failure of the operative fracture fixation and a deep tissue infection or abscess formation.

Q You went into some depth in your report about compartment syndrome and about the failings at the Haslar Hospital.

A There is a much better definition of compartment syndrome there than I gave half an hour ago.

F Q That may be the case, although for my part it was sufficient for us and in fact, as it is not a criticism that you would level at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in any way, I am not proposing to ask you more about that. From the bottom of page 17 of your report, in the final paragraph, you did have some conclusions that may be relevant for us. What is your opinion in terms of whether it would have been reasonable for any of the doctors who were looking after this patient to have considered the issue of the failure of the fixation of the fracture?

G A The fact that she remained in pain throughout the entire episode. I could understand her not being able to mobilise because of general debility – it is not uncommon in patients with femoral fractures of this kind – but for mobilisation to be painful and to continue to be painful and to fail to improve would have concerned me, certainly by the end of the first week.

H Q So after that and whilst she was in the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, what is your view on whether consideration should have been given to that?

A A It is consistently mentioned in the nursing records and in the medical records that she finds it painful to mobilise. Now, that really should not be happening at that point and the correct thing to do at that point would be to put her on to bed rest, take an x-ray and check that the implant fixation is sound.

Q Is that something that you suggest would be an appropriate course of action for just an orthopaedic doctor or for any doctor having the care of this lady?

B A I train non-orthopaedic, non-surgical doctors at a very junior level: first and second year post qualification, and I would expect any of them to execute that course of action.

Q Would that course of action have been confirmed as necessary by the review by Dr Reid in terms of the shortening of the leg?

A It appears that – one can only surmise, but he makes the comment that the leg is shortened and requests the x-ray. So it would seem that it was fairly much in the fore of his thinking.

C Q In terms of the treatment for a possible deep infection at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, what was your opinion on ultimately whether the treatment given was appropriate or not?

A My conclusion was that the choice of antibiotics given at the beginning was reasonable, given the context of the patient as far as I could understand it from the case records. I would have reviewed the antibiotic medication on receipt of the microbiology report and at that time stopped the metronidazole and started flucloxacillin, but continued with the ciprofloxacin.

Q You make a point in your report about appropriate secondary investigation.

A Yes. If the possibility of a deep infection or abscess were entertained, then the best investigation would be an ultrasound scan of the thigh.

E Q Who would that be referring to?

A The actual ultrasound would be done by a radiologist, but it would be requested by a doctor. May I expand on that a little?

Q Yes, of course.

F A I think that that is something that might not fall within the scope of a non-orthopaedic doctor.

Q In terms of evaluating it?

A Evaluating and recognising that it might come back to an orthopaedic opinion before an ultrasound would be requested. So it might have to come back to orthopaedics and at that point I imagine that investigation would have been requested.

G Q That rather leads on to the next question, which is whether it would have been reasonable to expect a doctor at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital to have referred this patient back for an orthopaedic review in light of the symptoms that she was displaying?

A Yes, I think that would have been the reasonable course of action.

Q You commented in your report, and it is the bottom of page 18 and then on to page 19, about whether these possible diagnoses were reversible. Can you help us with that?

H A Do you want me to comment on the compartment syndrome?

A

Q No, not for my purposes.

A The failure of the implant fixation is reversible. It is reversible by revision surgery. It is not common, but there are standard procedures in place for that. The deep infection is reversible as long as the infection does not get completely set on the implant. The difficulty with implants is that they do not allow blood into them, unfortunately, so you can very rarely completely eradicate an infection from an implant. You can keep it under control. So it is reversible to that extent.

B

Q In terms of controlling somebody's pain, or improving their mobility, is that something that can therefore be helped in that regard?

A Yes. There is a spectrum of infection from the more superficial and less serious infections which can be dealt with by antibiotic treatment, either by tablet form or intravenously, or if infection has become serious, or if abscesses develop, then surgical treatment of an infection may be necessary.

C

Q On page 20, your second paragraph on page 20, you make some conclusions about treatment at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Could you help the Panel with your view on what diagnoses there should have been, whether they are differential diagnoses or not, and what action should have been taken?

A The two possibilities that I reached for a differential diagnoses were that the implant had failed or that she had an uncontrolled infection, or indeed possibly both, which I do not state explicitly. I said that as a consequence it would have been prudent for further orthopaedic opinion to be sought.

D

Q Further investigation to have been carried out?

A Further investigation by way of a plain X-ray or an ultrasound of the thigh.

E

MR FITZGERALD: Yes. Very well. Those are all my questions, thank you, but there will be some more.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have reached the point, Mr Jenkins, at which we will give the witness a break. You have been on the stand for an hour.

A Have I?

F

THE CHAIRMAN: It sometimes passes very fast, does it not? I will try and break at about this sort of interval, but I should tell you that if at any time you feel in need of a break you only have to say so and we will adapt to your comfort and convenience, but for now you remain on oath, the Panel assistant will take you somewhere where you can get some refreshment, and we will return at 5 minutes to 11, please. Thank you. I should say please do not discuss the case with anybody. Thank you.

G

(The Panel adjourned for a short time)

THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, everyone. Mr [Code A], I stopped you before you could start.

H

A Cross-examined by MR JENKINS

Q You are refreshed now, Mr Redfern, so you are ready to deal with me. I have not got many questions, but can we just go back over the history for this lady.

A Yes.

B Q She broke her hip on 19 March. We see that on the front page of the chronology. We know that by the 24th, this is page 7, and we see the date on the previous page (page 6) the date is given as the 24th, there is a ward round at the Haslar Hospital and a Dr Lord is being suggested as someone who can undertake an assessment. We have Dr Lord's assessment over the page at page 7, and then Dr Reid's assessment. So this is five days after her fall.

A Yes.

C Q Dr Reid, we have already noted, and it is recorded in the entry on page 7, that he is asking for reassurance that all is well from an orthopaedic viewpoint; if all is well, then he would be happy for her to be transferred to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Your point, I think, is that this lady was not properly investigated whilst she was at the Haslar.

A In the context of what, the implant---

D Q Well, I think the way you have put it in your report, which the Panel do not have, you say that it is of grave concern that no further action seems to have been taken in relation to the diagnosis of compartment syndrome, looking at page 19.

A Yes. In relation to the diagnosis of compartment syndrome?

Q Yes.

A That is why I asked in what context. Yes.

E Q You say:

"In my opinion this lady had a significant bleed into her thigh in the early stages post-operatively" -

we are talking about the few days after the operation.

A Yes.

F Q "and the possibility of compartment syndrome was raised. Once the diagnosis of a compartment syndrome had been considered" - in other words raised - "then it is of grave concern" - your words - "that no further action seems to have been taken in relation to this potentially serious diagnosis."

The suggestion I have made is that this lady was not investigated as thoroughly as she could or should have been at the Haslar Hospital.

G A She probably did not even need to be investigated further. To explain the management of compartment syndrome---

Q Right.

A ---it is a clinical diagnosis. Really, almost once the possibility has been raised that a patient has compartment syndrome, then there is an obligation to act upon it.

H

- A Q What you have said in your report is that you would expect a basic level surgical doctor, junior doctor, to be able to make the diagnosis.
A Yes.
- Q But that a GP perhaps would not be in that position?
A A general practitioner might not be in that position.
- B Q The time that that should have been considered properly was when Mrs Spurgin was at the Haslar Hospital?
A Yes.
- Q It is not apparent that it was.
A That would appear to have been the case, I agree.
- C Q Again, Dr Reid indicates that he was seeking reassurance that everything was well orthopaedically. It was not in your view?
A That was at five days after the surgery. The issue of the compartment syndrome was a few days before that, if I could just refer back to the chronology.
- Q Please do.
A Yes, it was the 21st, which is sort of 48 hours post-admission and 24 hours post-operatively approximately. That is when the issue of compartment syndrome was raised.
- D Q Right.
A The issues related to compartment syndrome would probably have blown over by four or five days after the surgery.
- Q Okay.
A That episode would have been completed and the damage done.
- E Q Okay. You also say, and I am just going on in your report:
"Mrs Spurgin's early failure to mobilise and the pain that she described consistently on moving her injured leg should have given the doctors caring for her at Haslar sufficient reason to consider appropriate investigation by way of a further plain x-ray of the hip and thigh."
- F A Yes, I think that is fair.
Q "This would have eliminated the possibility of fixation failure."
A Yes, at that point.
- G Q You say:
"It seems from the medical record that these issues occurred prior to transfer to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital."
That, it would appear, was not really done.
- H A Yes, that would appear to be.

- A Q Does it follow that if you had been treating this lady you would not have been in a position to give Dr Reid the reassurance he was seeking?
A I do not think I would.
- Q Now, would it be your view that this lady was transferred out of the Haslar Hospital before properly she was ready for it?
A I would say that she was.
- B Q Yes. Once she arrived at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, it is clear that this lady was still reluctant to mobilise and in a great deal of pain.
A Yes.
- Q We know that she was given medication for the pain and swabs were taken. We have indications of that on the notes. If you turn, please, to page 17 of the summary, we see in the nursing care plan that swabs were taken. We have got indications in the medical records that those were sent off for analysis. If I can invite you to turn to the medical records for this patient, Patient I, if you still have them, and if I can invite you to turn to page 59 we will see that this is one report, and from the bottom left hand corner we see that this is a wound swab from the calf.
A Yes.
- C Q It is collected on 6 April 99, so that ties in with the date that we have just looked at on the chart. We will see, as we look along the bottom line, it is reported on 8 April, and we see a stamp when it is received on the ward. That would be typical, I think, a stamp or a date to be written on?
A Either when it is received or when it has been reviewed. It depends on the practice.
- D Q You would expect a doctor, when they review a result such as this, to initial it or sign it to say that they have seen it?
A Yes.
- E Q The Panel will hear in due course that that is Dr Barton's initials, which she entered. We see that it comes back, or is seen on the 9th. This is headed "Provisional Report!" We see that the culture result shows that staphylococcus aureus is isolated but that sensitivity tests were to follow; staphylococcus epidermidis again isolated. I think we have to look at the preceding page, page 57, to see when those sensitivity tests were reported. It took an extra day for that to be reported. The stamp at the bottom of the sheet, the date reported is 9 April.
A Yes.
- F Q The Panel will hear, I think, that the weekend (Saturday and Sunday) was 10 and 11 April. Signed by Dr Barton, and it is stamped as seen or received on the ward on 12 April, so a Monday?
A Yes.
- G Q What you have told us was that the antibiotics introduced by Dr Barton, we have them on the summary at page 18, you have told us that those antibiotics – metronidazole and suprox we have called it on the summary – those were a good best guess at that stage.
A Yes.
- H

- A Q We know, because we have just seen the results, that the swabs have not been reported on by 7 April.
A Yes.
- Q We will see from the next entry down that:
"Commenced antibiotics as hip wound may be infected."
- B That was the view, I think, at that stage?
A Yes.
- Q These antibiotics were brought in to deal with the infection that was probably there, but had not been identified.
A Yes.
- C Q What you have told us is that it might have been appropriate to review the antibiotics once the results had come in.
A Yes.
- Q We know that was by 12 April. I think if one follows through the chronology, we will see that on page 20, on the night of Saturday, 10 April, it looks as if this lady had a stroke.
D A I cannot comment on that.
- Q All right. Her condition was very poorly on the 11th. The entry that we have in the summary, relating to page 134, suggests that she was seen by Dr Barton. I am going to invite you and the Panel to turn up page 134, because it may be that the entry needs a bit of explaining.
A This is still in file I?
- E Q It is still in file I. There are two page numbers at the bottom of page 134. The other number is in a rather fatter pen, 107.
A Got it.
- F Q What we see for 11 April 99 in this nursing summary document is an entry which would appear to be written after 7.10 p.m., because it starts by relating something that happened in the evening on that Sunday night. The inference I suggest to be drawn is that this is an entry made by night staff, and we will see the very end of what the night staff entry is, the very last thing they write is "Seen by Dr Barton". I do not know that you can comment on it, Mr Redfern, but I am going to suggest that that was Dr Barton seeing the patient first thing on the Monday morning. It is the last thing that the night staff saw at the end of their shift. Again, we have to go back to page 57 because we know that the pathology report was seen or arrived on the ward on 12 April, and that is when Dr Barton signed it.
G A Yes.
- Q You have told us that it would have been appropriate to alter the antibiotics once that report had come in, and I think what we see is that the consultant Dr Reid is reviewing the patient again on that day, page 136, just after the 134 that you were looking at, yes, but I think what we have is a full clinical picture of this lady, that she is in a very poor condition, and I think it may be you would agree that the orthopaedic considerations were not at the front of the consultant's mind?
H

- A A That might be reasonable, but again it is difficult for me to comment without---
- Q I understand. So far as an X-ray is concerned, you have said that an X-ray was clearly sought. If we look back at the summary, page 18, swabs had been taken on 6 April. The summary, page 18, deals with the day after that. We see the entry in the clinical notes. Dr Reid, the consultant, has ordered an X-ray. If we are able to go back to page 134 of the notes, we see in a little more detail as to when the X-ray was actually booked for.
- B A Yes, I have that.
- Q It is just about a third of the way down the page. It is the entry for 7 April. It reads:
- “[Seen by] Dr Reid. For X-ray tomorrow at 15.00 hours”.
- A Yes.
- C Q Obviously the 8th. But you have not seen an X-ray that relates to the X-ray that was booked. If we go back to the summary, page 19, if you would, the bottom of the page, we see entries indicating Dr Reid wanted the patient to stay on bed rest until he saw an X-ray of the hip. You told us that was the way in which you would want to see the patient managed?
- A Yes.
- D Q Off her legs?
- A Yes.
- Q Until the X-ray was undertaken and reviewed?
- A Yes.
- E Q That clearly was the plan. That was a Friday. Dr Reid was due to come in on the Monday for a ward round and we know that he did by Monday the 12th. Again, it may be that the X-ray was not in the forefront of the mind, given this lady's condition. She was to die that night.
- A We do not actually know whether the X-ray was taken.
- Q We have not seen an X-ray in the records.
- A So we do not know whether the X-ray was actually taken.
- F Q No. I think that notes that we have do not indicate that it was or was not taken, or if it was not, why it was not. Can I ask, if this lady was to be reviewed by an orthopaedic surgeon, you would anticipate in a community hospital she would have to be transferred back to a hospital such as the Haslar?
- A I do not know what the local arrangements are at the Haslar. There are two ways of doing this.
- G Q One way is to ask a surgeon to come in?
- A Yes.
- Q What I am going to suggest is that in practice she would have had to be transferred?
- A What – as an inpatient?
- H

A Q That surgeons from the Haslar would not have wished to come over to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital to review a patient.

A Then she could have been seen as an outpatient or in an outpatient clinic.

Q I understand. At the time that would have been on 12 April?

A There is ample opportunity before that for her to be seen. This process began long before the end of April.

B Q I understand. What would have happened if this lady had been sent back to the Haslar Hospital? Would it have required a re-exploration of her hip?

A On the assumption that there was a failure of fixation, then there would have been an evaluation of her general fitness to go revision surgery.

Q Yes?

C A And had she passed that assessment, which is usually done by the anaesthetist who is scheduled to do the surgery, then she would have undergone revision surgery.

Q That evaluation is very important?

A Yes.

Q Because decisions have to be made about what is in the patient's best interest?

D A That is correct.

Q If a patient is elderly, in poor physical shape, it may well be thought this is not in the patient's best interests to undertake surgery under general anaesthetic?

A Yes. There would have to be considerable co-morbidity though. We have a very low threshold for operating on people with fractured neck of femur, because they commonly carry considerable co-morbidity. The bar is set fairly low.

E Q I understand. It is well recognised that general anaesthetic itself carries risks?

A It is.

Q And one would want to evaluate whether it is generally in the patient's interests and that they will survive the insult that general anaesthetic involves?

F A Death under anaesthesia is extraordinarily uncommon, even in very frail patients.

Q Under anaesthesia?

A Yes.

Q The patient has to be fit enough to undergo it?

A Yes.

G Q And be able to come round afterward?

A Yes.

MR JENKINS: Thank you very much.

H

A Re-examined by MR FITZGERALD

Q Mr Redfern, there are just two matters. Forgive me if they seem obvious, but I just want to clarify them. The first is that you agreed with the suggestion that in your view the transfer from Haslar Hospital to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital took place too soon?

A In my opinion.

B Q Because there were other things, other investigations, that you thought should have taken place there first?

A Looking at the case file in its entirety, it looks as though that is the case.

Q The question is therefore – and forgive me, as I say, if it is obvious – with that fact in any way remove the need for later doctors to consider an orthopaedic referral?

A No.

C Q The second point is simply this; you were explaining to Mr Jenkins a moment ago that there was ample opportunity before 12 April for the orthopaedic referral to happen, and that the process started long before then. Could you just explain what you meant by that?

A Again, on my review of the case records, problems with mobilisation were present from the day that she was transferred which was the 26th, I think she was eventually transferred over. The 26th March.

D Q Yes.

A There is assessment on the 24th and she was transferred on the 26th. Right the way up to the weekend immediately before she died. At any time there the consideration ought to have been given that there was something amiss.

MR FITZGERALD: Thank you. Those are the matters I wanted to clarify.

E THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed. Mr Redfern, we have reached the stage I mentioned at an earlier point this morning. The barristers have completed their questions and it is now open for members of the Panel to ask questions of you, if they have any. I am going to turn now to see if we do have questions. Yes. Dr Roger Smith is a medical member of the Panel.

F Questioned by THE PANEL

DR SMITH: I am a physician. Just thinking about your evaluation of this lady at the beginning of her third week, the 15th day – this is 9 April. This is about the staph aureus swabs coming back and she is described as ill and not drinking. “Irritable. Leave me alone.” From what you know of this lady, can you thinking for the lay members of this Panel, of any possible medical causes for that condition?

G A As far as I understand from the documentation prior to her fracture she was independent, living alone and mobilising without assistance. She was not on any medications as far as I am aware. So her pre-morbid state was reasonable. It is very difficult to say but it would fairly exclude, say, any dementing process for example. She presents as somebody who might have a derangement of her electrolytes. Most commonly in my experience the derangement of her electrolytes or an infection would cause similar features as you describe.

H

- A Q Indeed, one of your concerns is that she may have had a deep infection in the machinery that is in there?
A That is right, yes.
- Q Forgive the physician's view of your world. Such an infection can be severe, can it not?
A It can.
- B Q And cause very important systematic effects on the patient, on the whole patient?
A Yes. It is well recognised as a cause of alteration in demeanour. I am struggling for the right word. Confusion. That is the word. It can cause confusion.
- Q What I am coming round to and asking is, as an orthopaedic surgeon with such an ill, old lady is the situation irremediable?
A What?
- C Q If it is an infection.
A What? The condition of upset that she had?
- Q Yes.
A No. It is absolutely remediable. You run a standard set of tests, a standard set of sources of infection are looked at, including the wound, the urine, if necessary the chest. The chest is listened to – not necessarily X-rayed – but there is a standard set of things that you do in those circumstances.
- D Q At this late stage when she is really ill?
A Well, yes. I would. I have done that, yes.
- E Q Going back to what Mr Jenkins was asking you about, operating on frail old ladies, is it not a kind of dictum in your world that if you do not operate on some people they die, so it is worth operating on them on the chance that they may survive.
A This is part of the reason we set the bar so low for the threshold for proceeding to surgical fixation. It is recognised that fracture of the femur represents a biological state as well as a pure fracture. Some of what we do is actually to a degree palliative but it is well recognised that if we do not operate on people with hip fractures and get them fixed and mobilised, then it shortens their life expectancy.
- F Q Would you expect a physician to have that similar view as a general physician?
A It has been a dictum for 25-odd, 30 years now, so...
- Q Would you expect a general practitioner to understand that?
A I have to say, I probably would these days because... I probably would. I think it is that well known.
- G Q Would you expect nursing staff, whose job it is to receive patients from an orthopaedic unit, to know that?
A I would expect them to know. In the rehabilitation unit I would expect them to know that.
- H Q If there was proper liaison between the two units?

A A Yes.

Q And the scene was set for safety?

A If they are regularly receiving patients, then they ought to be aware of that.

Q In your opinion should this lady have died in Gosport War Memorial Hospital?

A It is very difficult for me to answer that.

B

Q In your opinion might she have had a better chance if she had been reviewed by an orthopaedic surgeon?

A I think she would have had a better chance had she been reviewed.

Q And that such a review is not a difficult thing to arrange, one way or another?

A No. It is fairly standard for patients to be sent to rehabilitation units and then sent back if there is something amiss.

C

DR SMITH: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Joy Julien is a lay member of the Panel.

MS JULIEN: What I am trying to clarify is, if you can, what weighting you would give to the fact that in your opinion she was transferred too early and the seeming lack of review. What had a great impact, if that is a fair question?

D

A The answer to that depends on me surmising that her fixation had failed. Had her fixation not failed, then it is difficult to say whether it would have had an effect or not. If the fixation had failed, then I think it would have been picked up earlier at the Haslar Hospital. Does that help?

E

Q Yes. It would have been picked up earlier, and so the outcome would have possibly been ---

A Earlier intervention.

Q Resulting in ---

A Resulting in the fracture healing and her being able to mobilise.

F

MR JULIEN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Pamela Mansell is a lay member of the Panel.

MRS MANSELL: Dr Redfern, I am not certain whether this is going to be really significant or not. There is something I did not quite understand. When you were talking about the microbiology report you said, or I understood you to say, the drugs were reasonable best guess, and I understood you to say "particularly as the lady was incontinent"?

G

A Yes. My best guess as an orthopaedic consultant would have been an anti-staphylococcal agent. I would have used a flucloxacillin and erythromycin or something similar.

Q As a lay person, could you break that down so that I can understand?

H

A A The bugs that were growing the staphylococcus and different bugs are sensitive to different types of antibiotics, so one antibiotic is particularly good at treating one bug, fairly good at treating another and no good at all at treating another.

Q Right?

B A So the commonest infection that occurs in orthopaedics by a street is staphylococcus infection. It is your number one suspect. If I was doing something on an empirical basis – best guess basis – I would have an anti-staphylococcal agent in there like flucloxacillin, which is probably the best. The antibiotics that were chosen: one is ciprofloxacin, which is a very broad spectrum. It will pick off a lot of bugs, but its direct action against staphylococcus is not as good as flucloxacillin. The other antibiotic that was chosen was metronidazole, and metronidazole is good against what are called gram negative bacteria, which are things that are found in the earth or in faeces, for example. So if a patient were faecally incontinent, then they might contaminate a hip wound, it being close enough proximately. So it was reasonable for those two antibiotics to be chosen.

C Q But how would it have been different if the person had not been incontinent?

A I do not think there was ever... I did not find anything in the record that she was faecally incontinent.

D Q No. That is right. I think there is a slight anxiety for me that this elderly lady had not been incontinent and then had gradually become, or there were indications of incontinence. I was trying to work out in my own mind, is that because this lady was actually incontinent, or is it because of the poor mobility and the worries, et cetera, of actually getting out of bed, because there was not previously ---

A Incontinent of urine.

E Q --- incontinence of urine. Yes – incontinence of urine.

A It is quite common following hip surgery. Quite common.

Q So when you talk about incontinence, I have to link that to the faecal incontinence, not the urine incontinence?

A Excuse me. As far as the metronidazole is concerned, that is anti-faecal so in my book it is anti-faecal prophylaxis.

F Q So the incontinence that we are saying may not necessarily be a sign of deterioration of the patient per se, but rather the incontinence of the urine, or can be a symptom of the fact that they are less mobile because of the pain?

A It is a transient feature commonly of people who have hip fracture.

MRS MANSELL: Thank you. That has helped me to understand that.

G THE CHAIRMAN: It is just me now, Mr Redfern. I am also a lay member of the Panel. Can I ask you to address your minds to the time when this patient was first admitted to Gosport and, in particular, was assessed by Dr Barton. There is reference to it in the schedule on page 10 referring to the clinical notes on page 27 in the bundle, although they are quite helpfully produced for us in the first column in the schedule if you have difficulty in reading the handwriting in the bundle.

H A Yes, I have those records.

A Q Given what you have already told us about your misgivings as to the status of the patient at the time that she was transferred and the fact that in your view this should have been spotted at Haslar, I need to ask you specifically about the assessment that took place when she arrived in Gosport. From what you can see of the notes and what you know that the patient would have been exhibiting by way of symptoms at the time that she would have arrived, are you able to make any comment on the adequacy of the assessment that was made on her at that time?

B A It seems a fairly sparse assessment at first glance. There is not an examination of the wound, for example, there is not an examination of – it is stated that she is not weight-bearing and that is the only assessment of the hip fracture that I can see in that record. Other than that, it does not appear that the patient's hips or legs have been examined.

Q Do I take it that is something you would regard as essential for the discharge of one's duty of proper assessment or not?

C A Well, she has been transferred to a rehabilitation hospital. That is the difficulty I have with answering that, because I do not operate in that sphere. I operate in the sphere of orthopaedic acute admissions. That is probably a question that should be asked of a consultant who has a special interest in the care of the medical elderly.

Q The adequacy of the assessment is a specific question that this Panel is going to have to decide at some point in the future. If you do not feel that you are the appropriate person to comment on that, then I will not press you further on that point.

D A This assessment was made in the rehabilitation unit, so I think it is probably not appropriate for me to comment on that.

Q Can I ask you a more general point from your experience of hospitals and records? You appeared to be expressing some surprise or perhaps concern that so far as the x-ray which had been ordered was concerned, there was no apparent note one way or the other to indicate whether the x-ray had actually been taken.

E A I am surprised that there is no record of the image anywhere. In fact, there are no x-rays available for any of her orthopaedic episodes as far as I am aware. They are unretrievable.

Q One point then is the retrievability. No doubt that is something that counsel on both sides have explored already. The other is the note that we have ourselves is the nursing note. Would you expect there to be a reference to, "Patient sent off for x-ray"?

F A Yes. I would expect it to be in the nursing record, "Patient went for x-ray today at X, Y, Z. Returned at A, B, C."

Q Where there is no such indication, are you able to make any inference?

A My inference is that the x-ray was not taken.

G THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That is all from me. Now we are at the point where I have to ask the barristers whether they have any questions arising out of the questions that were asked by members of the Panel. I am going to turn first to Mr Jenkins.

MR JENKINS: I do not, thank you.

H THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Fitzgerald?

A MR FITZGERALD: No, thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: So I am pleased to be able to tell you that does complete your testimony. We are most grateful to you for coming to assist us today. It is only through the presence of witnesses such as yourself that this Panel is able to get a clearer picture of what happened often months, even years, in the past and for your assistance in that regard we are extremely grateful. You are now free to go.

B
(The witness withdrew)

MR KARK: The next witness is Dr Richard Reid, please.

RICHARD REID, Affirmed
Examined by MR KARK

C
(Following introductions by the chairman)

Q I think it is Dr Richard Reid. Is that right?

A That is right.

D Q Dr Reid, so far as your involvement in the various inquiries into what happened at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital is concerned, I think you have made a number of statements – is that right? – the first starting in 2000 in relation to Gladys Richards and then you were making statements in 2004.

A That is right.

Q Then in 2006, you were interviewed by the police in July and August I think over a period in excess of 20 hours.

E A That is right.

Q So you have said a great deal about the events particularly concerning three patients. I am going to ask you some questions about that period in your life. If you find it difficult to remember, please just say so and if you need to have reference to material, then we may well be able to assist you. You will be able to have the patient notes in front of you when you are referring to them. Can I ask you first about your own medical background, please? I think so far as your own qualification is concerned, you qualified in Glasgow in 1974.

F A Yes, that is correct.

Q You became a member of the Royal College of Physicians in 1978, a Fellow at Glasgow in 1988 and a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in London in 1990.

A That is correct.

G Q As far back as the late 1970s and early 1980s, I think you were then beginning to consider a career in geriatric medicine.

A That is correct.

Q You became a consultant in geriatric medicine at Southampton General Hospital in August 1982.

H A That is correct.

- A Q Did you remain there until about March 1998?
A That is correct.
- Q Then I think you took up a role in April 1998 as a consultant in geriatric medicine and also medical director of the East Hampshire Primary Care Trust.
A First of all, it was Portsmouth Healthcare Trust.
- B Q That was its former name, as it were.
A Yes.
- Q Then it evolved into the East Hampshire Primary Care Trust.
A Yes. I had a similar role with Gosport Primary Care Trust.
- C Q I want to deal, please, with your occupation since April 1998 as a consultant at Portsmouth. Where were you based?
A When I first started, I was based at Queen Alexandra Hospital.
- Q Is that in the Portsmouth area?
A Yes. That is in Portsmouth. At that time, there were two district general hospitals in Portsmouth: the Queen Alexandra and St Mary's, and we had beds in both hospitals.
- D Q I think in early 1999, you took on the responsibility of one of the consultants at the Gosport War Memorial hospital.
A That is correct.
- Q How many other consultants were there who were looking after patients at that hospital?
A One: Dr Lord. That is inpatients I am talking about.
- E Q How did you take on that role? How did it evolve that that hospital required a consultant?
A There had always been, as I remember, one consultant who oversaw Daedalus Ward and one consultant who oversaw Dryad Ward and our responsibilities were rotated every now and again.
- F Q I think you remained in position from early 1999 to about March 2000.
A That is correct.
- Q That was as consultant specifically for the inpatients on Dryad Ward.
A That is correct.
- G Q In that role, did you come across Dr Barton?
A Yes.
- Q Had you had dealings with Dr Jane Barton prior to that?
A Not to the best of my recollection.
- Q You were aware no doubt that she was a local general practitioner.
A Yes.
- H

A Q And she had taken on the job of clinical assistant at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.
A Yes.

Q Were you aware that prior to the move to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, she had worked in the same position at the Redclyffe Annex?

A No, I was not aware of that.

B Q Were you aware that prior to you arriving there, she had been in post for quite some time?

A Yes.

Q Did you understand the position to be that when Dr Barton was not available, her work would be undertaken by locums, effectively partners at her practice?

A That was my understanding.

C

Q So there was an agreement of cover by the partners at her practice in relation to both Daedalus Ward and Dryad Ward.

A That is my understanding.

Q What role did you have in a supervisory context in relation to Dr Barton?

D

A Well, as the consultant in charge of the ward, I am ultimately responsible for the medical practice within that ward. At that time, I conducted a weekly ward round. My colleague, Dr Lord, also conducted a weekly ward round. Both ward rounds I think were on Monday afternoons, which meant that – in an ideal world, one would wish the clinical assistant to accompany one on the ward round. To try and overcome that problem, Dr Barton would attend my ward round on a fortnightly basis and on the alternate Monday would attend Dr Lord's ward round.

E

Q So you would be going along to Dryad Ward once a week.

A Yes.

Q That was Monday afternoons, was it not?

A Monday afternoons.

F

Q Dr Barton would join you on your ward round once a fortnight?

A At best.

Q At best. Does that mean there were occasions when she was not able to make the ward round?

A That is correct.

G

Q How long would your ward round normally take and what would you do?

A It was about three hours long and I would, with the senior nurse on duty and Dr Barton if she were there and with the senior registrar if one were attached to me at the time, take the notes trolley and do a ward round. In other words, look at every patient.

Q If there were patients causing Dr Barton particular concern, would you discuss those with her, or would you expect those to be raised with you so that you could discuss those with her?

H

- A A Dr Barton, if she was there, would raise issues with me. If Dr Barton were not there, then the nursing staff would point me in the direction of the patients who were causing concern.
- Q Tell us something, please, about your understanding of Dr Barton's experience and seniority?
- B A She was a very experienced general practitioner who had been functioning in that role at the War Memorial Hospital for I think ten or 11 years before I arrived there.
- Q Did you come across Sister Hamblin when you were there?
- A Yes, I did.
- Q Would she on occasion accompany you on ward rounds?
- A Yes.
- C Q Were there occasions when both Dr Barton and Sister Hamblin accompanied you, or would it be one or the other?
- A There would always be a senior member of the nursing team there, and Dr Barton if she was available.
- D Q In general terms how would you say that the ward was run?
- A Very well.
- Q Your appraisal of Sister Hamblin?
- A I beg your pardon?
- Q Your appraisal of Sister Hamblin? What would you say about her?
- A I thought she was a very kind, caring ward sister.
- E Q By the time you arrived in 1999, as you have already indicated, I think, both of those individuals would have been at that hospital for a fairly considerable period of time?
- A Correct.
- F Q How easy did you find it coming into your post and having to take charge, as it were?
- A Well, I do not recall encountering any sort of great difficulty. I felt that the nursing staff were very mature, sensible nursing staff, and I found in general it was a pleasure to work in that ward.
- Q We have heard a certain amount about how full the ward was at various times.
- A Yes, that is correct.
- G Q You were able to get through all of the patients in an afternoon, were you, or not?
- A Yes.
- Q Did the occupancy of the beds vary from time to time?
- A Not greatly. I would say most of the time the beds were one hundred per cent occupied.
- H Q In that respect, can you remember whether you had any conversations with Dr Barton about how busy she was?

A A I recollect having a conversation, I think it would be in early 2000, about the pressures of the job.

Q Can I ask you a little bit about the sort of patients that were occupying those beds on Dryad Ward? What sort of patients did you deal with?

B A Well, largely they were continuing care patients, in other words patients who were going to be there for the rest of their lives. That was a little bit different from my previous post in Southampton, where most of the type of patient who were in Dryad Ward at that time would actually have been in a nursing home. So that was slightly unusual. I said in statements that over the course of that year, I think that because of the move of patients who would formerly have been NHS long term continuing care patients out into nursing homes, we started to have beds become free on the ward, and at that time, even as there is now, there is always huge pressure at the front door of the hospital to move patients on who can be moved, and we were sort of put under pressure to take patients who might not be continuing care, in other words the sort of patient who I would describe as they have not made a full recovery from their illness, not quite clear in what direction this patient is going to go; are they going to get better or might they become a continuing care patient.

C Q Does that indicate that those patients required more care?

D A They could be more physically dependent. What they might also warrant though is occupational therapy and physiotherapy assessment, but it is also possible that they could have been less stable medically than patients who had been previously transferred over.

Q Now, some of those patients of all groups presumably at one stage or another might require analgesia.

A Yes.

E Q I want to just examine with you for a moment what your understanding at the time was. Did you know of the principles of the analgesic ladder?

A I was aware of the principles but not the term.

Q Your understanding of the principles would be what?

F A That one would generally make an assessment of a patient's pain, and broadly speaking there are three levels of analgesia: paracetamol; secondly, non-steroidal or mild opiates; and, thirdly, strong opiates.

Q The principle of the analgesic ladder would be what in dealing with a patient's pain?

A To ensure that the pain was appropriately managed with the correct level of analgesia.

Q We know also that a number of patients who were looked after on Dryad Ward eventually went on to a syringe driver.

G A Yes.

Q Can I ask you, please, what your experience prior to starting this job at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital had been of syringe drivers?

A Very limited.

Q What does that mean?

H A Well, where I had worked before we did not have continuing care patients, and we had a palliative care ward on site to which one could refer for advice or indeed transfer

A patients over, so we were not dealing with many patients who were at the end of their lives and needing palliation.

Q So previously if you found a patient did need palliation, then you would refer them over?

A Possibly. I mean, I might on occasion deal with it myself, and if I felt that I was managing the patient appropriately I would be content with that. If I felt that the patient's pain control was causing me problems, then I would refer on.

B

Q Okay. Prior to beginning your work at Dryad Ward, had you yourself prescribed syringe drivers to people, with opiates?

A I think yes, but I could not be absolutely sure.

Q Is that an indication that if you had done it was not a common thing for you?

A It is not a common occurrence.

C

Q Dealing with opiates, the various styles of morphine that there are, what experience had you had prior to coming to this job at Dryad Ward prescribing morphine?

A Probably prescribing morphine on occasion, and on occasion diamorphine.

Q For what purposes?

A Well, usually for pain control, but also for people who might be distressed in the terminal stages of an illness, where it was unclear whether the distress was mental distress or physical distress or a combination of both.

D

Q It may be obvious, but when you are talking about the terminal stage of an illness, these are patients who are very ill?

A Yes.

E

Q As you know, because you were asked about it by the police, because on some occasions at least you saw it, variable doses were prescribed by Dr Barton.

A Yes.

Q Those were variable doses of, among other drugs, diamorphine.

A Yes.

F

Q Had you, prior to coming to the Dryad Ward, come across variable doses of diamorphine?

A Possibly. I mean, it is so long ago and I did not see many patients in my previous career who required syringe drivers, I mean, possibly on one or two occasions, but I really could not say.

G

Q Can you recall an occasion or occasions when you discussed variable doses with Dr Barton?

A Yes, I remember one occasion.

Q What did your discussion revolve around?

A It revolved around the sort of, if you like, principle of variable dose prescribing.

H

I asked Dr Barton why she was prescribing a variable dose and she indicated to me that that was because at times she herself was not immediately available, or her partners might not be

A immediately available, and particularly at a weekend when she or her partners might be engaged in visiting patients at home, so as to allow a patient's distress to be relievable quickly rather than to wait for a doctor to attend she prescribed it for that reason, and I accepted these reasons.

Q What sort of variable doses did you think you were discussing with her, or were you discussing with her?

B A Well, I do not have a clear recollection of actually discussing a dosage range, but my recollection was that it was in relation to a patient who had received 20-80mg.

Q You raised that with Dr Barton?

A Yes.

Q Did you ever have any discussion with her about ranges such as 20-200mg?

C A I do not recollect having such a discussion.

Q Had you come across that sort of range prior to Dryad Ward, first of all?

A No.

Q Have you ever come across it since?

A No.

D Q At the time did you realise, and we will have to look at some prescription sheets in due course, that those sort of prescriptions were being written by Dr Barton?

A No. I was certainly aware of variable dose prescribing, but I cannot recollect seeing prescriptions for 20-200.

Q If you had seen such a variable dose, is that something you would have potentially raised, or not?

E A I should have raised that with Dr Barton.

Q Now, we are also I think in due course going to hear something about anticipatory prescribing.

A Yes.

F Q Have you heard that expression before?

A Yes.

Q Is that something that you have come across elsewhere or only on Dryad Ward?

A I have come across it elsewhere, and in fact we practise anticipatory prescribing on our palliative care ward in Queen Alexandra Hospital today.

G Q Just give us examples, please, of the appropriate ways that anticipatory prescribing can be performed, in what circumstances.

A Well, as I say, it is on the palliative care ward and it is usually the type of patient who again has been very ill, it is not really clear which course their life is going to take, in other words are they going to recover from this illness or might they soon become terminally ill; in other words, the timescale I am thinking of is becoming unwell within the next few days.

H Q What sort of anticipatory prescribing would you then expect, or might you find?

- A A In terms of, what, the range of drugs, or dosages, or---
- Q First of all, drugs, and dosages.
- A Well, I am not involved with the palliative care ward at the moment, but diamorphine is obviously one. I think midazolam and haloperidol, and there is a fourth, and I am not sure off the top of my head what the fourth drug is.
- B Q The sort of dosages that you come across in appropriate patients would be what?
- A I honestly cannot tell you---
- Q You cannot assist.
- A ---what the current practice is in the palliative care ward.
- Q All right. What would you say about the concept of anticipatory prescribing of opiates for patients who were not then in pain?
- C A Well, I think in the circumstances I have just described, if somebody is very frail, been seriously ill, in whom one did not know which direction their course were to take, I think it is not unreasonable, in fact good practice, to think about anticipatory prescribing, because I think it is better that doctors who are experienced in doing that do it during nine to five, in other words the patient has been seen by someone who is practising every day in palliative care rather than leaving the prescribing to out-of-hours junior doctors who may know very little about informed palliative care prescribing.
- D Q If the doctor is going to write out an anticipatory prescription of that nature, what sort of instruction, if any, would it be necessary to go with that sort of prescription?
- A I think on the prescription chart there is a sort of small square for indication for pain, for distress, usually an indication about how frequently the drug may be administered, and obviously the dose.
- E Q That would be an instruction to whom?
- A For the nursing staff.
- Q In terms of the ability to increase a dose, and I am sticking to opiates for the moment, again what was your understanding of the incremental nature of the increase in doses of morphine?
- F A Well, at that time, and I would have to confess it reflects my sort of inexperience of palliative care prescribing, but I would have thought that doubling the dose every day would have been appropriate, but I had very limited experience of palliative care prescribing. That would have been my understanding at the time.
- Q You are referring to palliative care prescribing, palliative in those circumstances meaning in your mind---
- G A Well, I think I am talking about any, sort of – where a patient is in significant pain and distress for whatever reason, they may be palliatively unwell or in pain or distress for some other reason.
- Q If you had at that stage been required to prescribe opiates, would you yourself have wanted to check in the *BNF*, or not?
- H A Almost certainly.

- A Q Now, the *BNF* of course is a guide.
A Yes.
- Q It is not a protocol. It does not require you to stick, as it were, to it, but to what extent would you have followed the guidance in the *BNF*?
- B A I think if it was any departure from normal, or if I encountered a patient on a preparation with which I was not familiar, then I would certainly look at the *British National Formulary*.
- Q Did you also have an understanding of conversion rates from oral morphine to subcutaneous morphine?
- A I think perhaps you mean subcutaneous diamorphine.
- C Q You are quite right, I do mean diamorphine. I am using morphine as the generic term.
A I mean, my understanding at that time was a conversion factor of 2 to 1, although that has since been amended to sort of 3 to 1, in other words you would half or third the dose of morphine to convert to diamorphine.
- Q At the time in 99, when you were at Dryad Ward, your understanding would have been one half, would it?
- D A That is correct.
- Q Does that reflect – and I do not mean this rudely – your training? Is that how you were trained or does that simply reflect inexperience?
- A That was my understanding of what the conversion ratio was.
- Q In terms of the prescribing and use of these sort of drugs, how would you compare your experience with that of Dr Barton and Sister Hamblin?
- E A They had much more experience of dealing with this than I had.
- Q And did that reflect itself in your discussions and your relationship with them?
- A I am sure it did.
- Q In what way?
- F A I felt they had much more experience of using these drugs than I had and I was happy to rely on their advice.
- Q I want to have it clear. There is one occasion that we are going to look at when you overruled something---?
- A Yes.
- G Q --- that Dr Barton had done, but other than on that occasion are you saying that you deferred to their opinion?
A I was aware that Dr Barton and Sister Hamblin had a lot of experience of managing palliative care more than I had, and I would just say, I was happy to rely on them.
- Q You spoke about a conversation that you had had about a variable dose with Dr Barton?
- H A Yes.

- A Q And you described her explanation for why it was necessary?
A Yes.
- Q You may have said this already, but did you at that time accept the explanation that was given to you?
A Yes, I did.
- B Q In terms of the use of syringe drivers you told us already that your own experience was limited?
A Very limited.
- Q Very limited. In terms of the use of syringe drivers at Dryad Ward the experience of Dr Barton and Sister Hamblin – would that have been greater than yours?
A Oh, yes.
- C Q And again in terms of the use of syringe drivers and whether it was appropriate to utilise them or not, is that something you would have deferred to their opinion or not?
A One generally looks to using a syringe driver when someone will not be able to take oral medication or it may be distressing for them to have repeated injections. That is the sort of situation in which one would be looking to employ a syringe driver.
- D Q I understand that. But if you felt that a syringe driver had been set up with a patient by a doctor as experienced, as you have told us, as Dr Barton or potentially, I suppose, by Sister Hamblin, is that something in normal circumstances that you would query or challenge?
A I would certainly ask why a syringe driver had been commenced.
- E Q Did you actually do that in this case? When you were on Dryad, did you ever ask about that, can you remember, or not?
A I am sure I would have done.
- Q I want to move on, please, to some patients that you dealt with. You have explained, of course, that you did not start there until 1999. So far as we are concerned, the patients that I think you dealt with directly would be Enid Spurgin, Geoffrey Packman and Elsie Devine?
A Yes, and there is also Sheila Gregory.
- F Q We are not dealing with Sheila Gregory in this case. I think also you wrote a letter in relation to Gladys Richards. Do you recall that now or not?
A This was after assessing her in Haslar Hospital, was it?
- Q Yes.
A Yes.
- G Q I think we shall start with her because I think your dealings with Gladys Richards were very limited.
A That is correct.
- H Q You will see on your left there are a number of bundles. Could you take up bundle E, please. Could you have a look at page 24, please. I think we have now added a second page

A to this, 24 and 26. I am not going to ask you a great deal about this at all, but is this effectively your letter to Surgeon Commander Scott?

A Yes.

Q At the Royal Haslar. Why were you reviewing this patient?

A Because one of our roles as consultants in geriatric medicine was to review elderly patients on non-elderly medicine wards where it was felt that our involvement would be appropriate, either in terms of giving advice or taking over the patient's care.

Q If we go to the second page, I think you summarise, helpfully, your findings. You say:

“When I saw Mrs Richards she was clearly confused and unable to give any coherent history. However she was pleasant and cooperative. She was able to move her left leg quite freely although not able to actively lift her extended right leg from the bed, she appeared to have a little discomfort on passive movement of the right hip. I understand that she has been sitting out in a chair and I think that, despite her dementia, she should be given the opportunity to try to re-mobilise. I will arrange for her transfer to Gosport War Memorial Hospital. I understand that her daughters intend to give up the place in Glenheathers Nursing Home as they have been unhappy with the care but would be happy to arrange care in another nursing home.”

D When you talk there about giving her the opportunity to try to remobilise, first of all can you recall this patient now?

A Very vague recollection.

Q Is there any reading that we should do between the lines here when you use that expression? What are you saying about Gladys Richards?

E A I think I felt her prospects for remobilising were not good.

Q Why is that?

A We know that patients who are confused and have dementia, it is often difficult for them to assimilate instructions, so often when they are seen by physiotherapists they are unable to remember what they have been instructed to do the day before. So it is quite difficult to make progress.

F Q Nevertheless, you were arranging for the transfer of this patient to Gosport War Memorial Hospital?

A Yes.

Q For what purpose?

G A Because I felt she should be given the opportunity to.

Q This patient, in fact, was admitted to Daedalus Ward on 11 August 1998. Was there any distinction between Dryad and Daedalus Ward in terms of rehabilitation?

A Yes.

Q Tell us about that, please.

H

A A Daedalus Ward was a rehabilitation ward, and Dryad Ward had been designated as a continuing care ward. There was, as I recollect, no routine physiotherapy or occupational therapy available on Dryad Ward whereas there was on Daedalus Ward.

Q Did that change? Did you begin to get more rehabilitation patients on Dryad Ward as time went on?

A Certainly patients who were not clear continuing care patients.

B

Q And how did that change come about?

A It came about, I think, because of the move of what formerly have been NHS long-stay patients into private nursing homes, and so that created capacity within the continuing care ward. Because of pressures at the front door, one looked to see who would be the most suitable patients to transfer to Dryad Ward, in other words, ones who were not likely to need significant amounts of input from physiotherapy or occupational therapy.

C

Q I think that was your only dealing with this particular patient?

A Yes.

Q She was transferred to Daedalus Ward as we know and, of course, that was not your sphere at that hospital.

A Yes.

D

Q We can put that away. I want to turn, please, to your dealing with Enid Spurgin, who is our Patient I. Could you take out Patient I's file, please. We are going to start just by reviewing her history, I hope, because I think you saw this patient first of all at the Haslar Hospital?

A Correct.

E

Q Could we start, please, at page 356. You will have to get used to this, but the page numbers to concentrate on are those with a little line either side. This is not your note, but I think it may just help you to bring the patient back to mind. We can see that she had had an accident. She had been pulled over by a dog, apparently, and landed on her right hip. It is described as a direct blow. She had a fractured right subtrochanteric fracture. Is that right?

A That is correct.

F

Q If you go to page 374 – in fact would you look at the page before that, 373. Your note appears on page 374, I think. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q Let us just look at the note before that. This is a note made, I think, after the lady had been operated upon. We can see that there is a note to Dr Lord.

G

“Many thanks for reviewing this pleasant 92 year old lady who was admitted on the 18th March having sustained a sub-trochanteric fracture to the [right] femur ... She was previously well, with no significant past medical history, living alone and independently with no social service input. She was transfused with 3 units of blood, but otherwise made an unremarkable post-op recovery. She has proved quite difficult to get mobilised, and her post-op rehabilitation may prove somewhat difficult. Additionally the quality of her skin, especially her lower legs is poor and at great risk

H

A of breaking down. Surgeon Commander Scott would appreciate your advice regarding her rehabilitation and consideration of a place at GWMH."

That is written by a house officer to Surgeon Commander Scott. Could we look at your note, please, of 23 March and could you just take us through that?

A You mean just read it?

B Q Yes

A

"Thank you.

A delightful 92 year old lady, previous well, with sub-trochanteric fracture of the [right] femur. She is still in a lot of pain which is the main barrier to mobilisation at present – could her analgesia be reviewed?

C

I'd be happy to take her to GWMH provided you're satisfied that orthopaedically all is well with the [right] hip.

Please let me know."

And there is a telephone number.

D

Q I think at that time, and you can have a look at some drug charts from the Haslar if you wish, the patient was on paracetamol. The drug charts are at 328. Yes?

A Yes.

Q Together with that note that we just looked at, could we now go to page 301. This is a note from you, again to Commander Scott, dated 26 March 1999. You referred to seeing her on ward E6 on 24 March. The last note we looked at was 23 March. Is it likely to reflect the same visit?

E

A Yes.

Q You say in the third paragraph down:

F

"When I saw her she was fully orientated and able to give a good account of herself. The main problem was the pain in her right hip and swelling of her right thigh. Even a limited range of passive movement of the right hip was still very painful. I was concerned about this and I would like to be reassured that all is well from an orthopaedic view point. If you are happy that all is well, I should be happy for [her] to be transferred to the War Memorial Hospital ...".

G

So the purpose of this, perhaps, is obvious. You wanted to make sure that she was all right for transfer?

A Yes.

Q The pain and the swelling in her right thigh would be an indication of what, if anything – or is that just post-operative?

H

A You may get some bleeding post-operatively and I would suspect that is the most likely reason at that time for her thigh to be swollen. Another possibility is she could have had a deep venous thrombosis, but I think if it was centred around ---

A

Q Could you say that again? A deep venous ---?

A A deep venous thrombosis. It would really depend on clinical examination at the time, but if it is centred around the wound then the most likely thing would be that it would be a wound haematoma bleeding into the wound.

B

Q I do not think that we have any response from Surgeon Commander Scott. This patient was transferred on the day that this letter was written on 26 March to Dryad Ward. If we go to page 23, is this a transfer note effectively?

A Yes.

Q Written by whom?

A It looks like the signature is – is it – Code A

C

Q And it is addressed, "Dear Sister". Would that effectively be addressing it to Sister Hamblin?

A Yes.

Q We can see the note that is made. It describes what has happened to her.

"Post operatively, she is now mobile from bed to chair with two nurses and can walk short distances with a zimmer frame. She has no urinary catheter and although she is continent during the day she has been sometimes incontinent at night.

D

The skin on her lower legs is paper thin so she is not to TED stockings."

Those are those tight stockings to prevent a DVT. Is that right?

A Yes.

E

Q

"Her right lower leg is very swollen and has a small break on the posterior aspect. This has been steristripped. Her consultant recommends they be elevated.

She needs encouragement eating and drinking but can manage independently.

F

Drugs have not been included as her only medication is analgesia (paracetamol) PRN."

Does that reflect the position on her transfer?

A It certainly reflects what Sister Code A.. Presumably it reflects what she observed.

G

Q Is this a patient who in your view was appropriately transferred to Dryad, or more appropriately would have been transferred to Daedalus Ward?

A I think if at the time there was no physiotherapy or occupational therapy available on Dryad Ward, it would have been more appropriate that she should be transferred to Daedalus Ward.

H

Q Can we go to page 27, please? Do you see a note there by Dr Barton at the top?

A Yes.

A Q We see on 26 March:

“Transfer to Dryad ward
Fracture of neck of femur
Previous medical history – nil of significance
Barthel”

B But there is no Barthel score. Then:

“No weight bearing
Tissue paper skin
Not continent

Plan – sort out analgesia”

C Can I just ask you to help us with this? That does not seem quite reflective of the note that has gone before by the previous assessor. Help us with this. If there is a difference between the state of the patient when they arrive on Dryad Ward and the state as it is described in the previous notes or in the transfer letter, what, if anything, would you expect to be done?

A A number of things could be done. One could contact – the nursing staff could contact the ward to speak to Sister or Captain [Code A]. It would also be important to examine the patient and see if there is any obvious reason for the apparent change. Might I say something?

Q Yes.

A Captain [Code A]'s note was really quite at variance with what I found two days before.

E Q Just keeping a finger where you are, let us go back to the letter that you wrote at page 301. You say that she is fully orientated and able to give a good account of herself.

A Yes.

Q And:

“The main problem was the pain in her right hip and swelling of her right thigh. Even a limited range of passive movement ... was still very painful.”

F Yes?

A Yes.

Q Does that indicate that she is not weight-bearing?

A I would be very surprised if this lady were able to weight bear without very significant help and support.


G Q When you talk about somebody weight-bearing, does it mean walking on their own or walking with assistance?

A I would say standing in the first instance.

Q The purpose of this transfer, if it were possible, was to mobilise the patient.

A Yes.

H

- A Q Let us go back to page 27 and let us see what happened. First of all, the plan is described as "Sort out analgesia".
A Yes.
- Q Help us. Would you expect to see any other sort of plan written out by the assessing doctor, or not?
A I think it is difficult, because one cannot remember the patient, but clearly if Dr Barton has written "Nil of significance" in terms of past medical history, I said this lady was alert and orientated or words to that effect, so I think the most important thing would be reviewing her analgesia and then – after a hip operation, it is very common for people to be in pain and discomfort. The issue then is, one would expect that pain and discomfort, if all has gone well orthopaedically, to gradually lessen with time.
- B
- C Q If it does not, what is that an indication of?
A There would appear to be a problem somewhere.
- Q Would you expect that problem to be assessed?
A Yes.
- Q And hopefully diagnosed?
A Yes.
- D Q And a plan written up to deal with it?
A Yes.
- Q The next note is I think some 12 days later. Whose note is this?
A That is mine.
- E Q Could you read it through for us, please?
A Yes.
- "Still in a lot of pain and very apprehensive.
MST [increased] to 20 mg bd yesterday
Try adding flupenthixol
For x-ray right hip as movement
still quite painful – also about
2" shortening of right leg."
- F Q Again, it may be obvious, but what does that indicate to you?
A There is clearly a continuing problem with the right hip.
- G Q What did you think the nature of that problem might be?
A There would be a number of possibilities. The hip could have been dislocated, there could be a deep-seated wound infection, a superficial wound infection. Given that this lady is  and she has had a fracture, it is likely that she has osteoporosis. I think she had a dynamic hip screw inserted and if the bone into which that insert is very soft, then the head of the femur can collapse and that can cause shortening of the leg. That was the purpose behind requesting an x-ray, to see if we could get to the bottom of what was going on.
- H

A Q If Dr Barton had formed the same view when she reviewed this patient, would she have been able to ask for an x-ray? It does not take a consultant to ask for an x-ray, does it?
A No.

Q You also note that there is a two-inch shortening of the right leg.
A Yes.

B Q How would you have ascertained that?
A From examination of the patient's leg.

Q Standing?
A Oh, no. It would be lying on a bed. I cannot say for sure, but almost certainly. We generally measure leg shortening with people lying in bed.

C Q The last note was on 26 March and this note is now 7 April 1999.
A Yes.

Q Does that surprise you in any way, or not?
A If the patient had been in a lot of continuing pain, then I think it would have been appropriate that an assessment be made of the patient.

D Q What we do know from the drug charts – and I am just going to use the chronology that we have for the moment – is that this patient had been administered 20 mg of MST since 31 March.
A Yes.

Q Prior to that in fact she had been prescribed and administered Oramorph.
A Which page is this?

E Q If you go to page 178, do you see the prescription for MST, "Morphine MST", dated 31 March halfway down the page?
A Yes.

Q You have told us obviously that Dr Barton had considerably more experience than you prescribing certainly diamorphine. What about opiates?
A Diamorphine is an opiate.

Q I am sorry. What about MST?
A Again, it is an opiate. It is morphine.

Q Who had the greater experience, would you say?
A Of prescribing MST?

G Q Yes.
A Probably Dr Barton. Probably.

Q Where a prescription like that is written, would you necessarily expect to see anything in the clinical notes?

H A I think that in general terms when one is introducing opiates, there should be a note in the clinical record.

A

Q Why?

A Because opiates are controlled drugs and they are controlled for a reason.

Q Did you expect this patient to go off for x-ray?

A Yes.

B

Q Who, following your note on the 7th, would actually have had to arrange that?

A I am not clear whether – I might have written the x-ray card on the ward round or, if Dr Barton was there, she might have written it. I could not say.

Q We have a nursing note at page 134. Do you see in the middle of that page:

“7.4.99 Seen by Dr Reid. For x-ray tomorrow at 100 hrs.”

C

A Yes.

Q When you write a note like that in the clinical records, who would you expect to read it?

A The medical staff and possibly nursing staff too.

D

Q The medical staff in this case would be - ?

A Dr Barton or if there was a senior registrar or one of Dr Barton's partners who were covering.

Q The next clinical note that we see is written by who?

A By me.

E

Q Does that surprise you in any way?

A One would have expected by that time that the x-ray had been undertaken and a note made of the result.

Q Let us have a look at what had happened on 12 April. Could you read through your note, please, first of all?

A Yes.

F

“Now very drowsy (since diamorphine infusion established)
 reduced to 40mg for 24 hours
 if pain recurs, increase to 60mg.

Able to move hip without pain
 but patient not rousable.”

G

Q Can we just deal with the necessity of making notes? You have made notes in relation to both of your assessments of this patient at this stage.

A Yes.

Q How important do you regard it to make a note?

A I regard it as very important.

H

- A Q Again, I am sorry to ask such obvious questions, but why?
A So that there is a clear record available, both to me when I might see the patient next or to any other medical practitioner who is called or for the nursing staff.
- Q Can we have a look, please, keeping a finger where you are, at page 174? Again, it is the drug chart. Do you see at the top there a prescription has been written out by Dr Barton?
A Yes.
- B Q For between 20 and 200 mg of diamorphine.
A Yes.
- Q If we look below that, we can see a prescription for hyoscine.
A Yes.
- C Q And if we look below that, a prescription for midazolam, between 20 and 80 mg.
A Yes.
- Q The effects of midazolam are what?
A Sedative.
- D Q Does midazolam have an effect on either the heart rate or the respiration rate?
A I am not a pharmacological expert, but I would imagine it would have an effect on your breathing, but not on heart rate.
- Q The diamorphine has an effect on what?
A Breathing, consciousness.
- E Q There we have an example of what I asked you about as a generality before: a variable dose of between 20 and 200 mg.
A Yes.
- Q You have told us I think that you had never seen that before.
A Well, I did not recollect that prescription.
- F Q Do you have any view about it?
A I think, as I said before, the dosage range is very wide. When I talked before about variable dose prescribing, if I remember correctly, it was in the context of over a long weekend, where Dr Barton or her partners might not be available and we can certainly see that over a course of a long weekend it might be necessary for someone's diamorphine to be increased from 20 to 80 mg, but I could not see that with 20 to 200 mg.
- G Q Do you think it is an acceptable prescription or not?
A No, I do not.
- Q The starting dose appears to be 80 mg.
A Yes.
- Q You reduced it by I think half.
A Yes.
- H

- A Q Tell us why you did that.
A Because I thought that was too large a step up in dosage.
- Q What effect do you think it was having on the patient?
A Over-sedation of the patient.
- B Q If this patient had been up to this stage on MST – and MST, we know, I think is an oral dose.
A That is correct.
- Q Is it a tablet?
A Yes.
- C Q We know I think from the drug chart that MST – I am going in fact from our chronology, but if we look at page 178, we can see that there is a dose of morphine MST at 10 mg.
A Yes.
- Q Prescribed on 31 March. Then on 6 April, a new dose of 20 mg bd. Is that twice daily?
A Yes.
- D Q Those are regular prescriptions to be given at eight o'clock in the morning and eight o'clock at night.
A Yes.
- Q We can see, if we go along the row, that those were indeed administered.
A Yes.
- E Q If you keep your finger at 178 but also go to 160, please, we can see, I think, that on the day before – you came along on the 12th – on 11 April the patient had been given, in addition to her MST, some Oramorph.
A Yes.
- F Q That would appear to have been, I think it is, 5mg.
A Yes.
- Q Because it is two and a half millilitres and there is 10mg in 5ml.
A Yes.
- G Q So on the day before that syringe driver was started, the patient appears to have been on 45mg total of morphine, whether it is MST or Oramorph?
A Yes.
- Q You told us earlier about your own understanding of the conversion rate, which I think has been reviewed since these events?
A Yes.
- H Q But at the time your understanding of the conversion rate would have been to halve it?
A Yes.

- A
- Q Which would mean a subcutaneous dose of between 20 and 25mg?
 A Yes, but I think it is perhaps important to say that at this stage this lady's pain was still not controlled.
- Q Now, is that an explanation for the 80mg dose, or is that an explanation for why you only reduced it to 40?
 B A It is an explanation of why this lady needed a higher dose of opiates than the 20-25 she suggested.
- Q We have to add to that, I suppose, your understanding at the time that you could double up the dose---
 A Yes.
- C Q ---as your incremental increase.
 A Yes.
- Q So first of all we start off with your understanding that you should halve from oral if going to subcutaneous---
 A Yes.
- D Q ---but then your understanding that you should double up if an increase was required?
 A At that time that was my understanding.
- Q Is that how you got to 40?
 A Yes.
- E Q Well, you tell us, how did you arrive at the figure of 40?
 A I think that would be the way I would have done it.
- Q Using your own figures would that have been a substantial increase, or as much of an increase as you would want to allow, or would you have gone higher than that?
 A Than 40?
- F Q Yes.
 A No. I think 40 was the right dose in these circumstances.
- Q What was the danger, if any, for this patient of the dose that she was then on, of 80mg?
 A Over-sedation and respiratory depression.
- G Q What is the danger of that?
 A Well, if patients are sufficiently over-sedated, respiratory depression can result in death.
- Q If we just follow this through, back to your clinical note, please, page 27, you have recorded:
- H "Now [very] drowsy (since diamorphine infusion established) – reduce to 40mg/24 hrs – if pain recurs" –

A

and then that is an arrow up, I think, to 60mg, is that right?

A Yes, that is right.

Q What is the note below: "Able to move hips"?

A "without pain but [patient] not rousable".

B

Q "patient not rousable" perhaps we all understand. What efforts would you make to rouse the patient?

A Well, first of all speak to the patient. If they do not respond to speech, then touch them, perhaps shake an arm. In extreme circumstances what one can do is give the patient a painful stimulus, for example squeezing a toe, squeezing a finger, earlobe, or, in someone who has been in pain from the hip, then moving the hip would be---

C

Q You were unable to get any response from the patient?

A Yes.

Q What was your understanding of how long it would take for your reduction to have effect?

A I would have thought that would have been having an effect within an hour of reducing it, but I am not an expert in pharmacology.

D

Q We can see from the clinical record that on 13 April at 1.15 in the morning the patient was confirmed to have died.

A Yes.

Q Now, I just want to look at timing, please, so I am going to ask you to be given the original - we have now created a file with all of the originals that we have got in it, and I am going to ask for the original prescription sheets for Patient I to be handed to you. (Same handed) It is difficult for us to read, on page 174, but can you just help us with the timing: I think the original 80mg was started at eight o'clock in the morning, is that right? Sorry, you will have to find the right page first.

E

A Yes. Well, it looks like eight o'clock or nine o'clock in the morning; I think probably eight o'clock.

F

Q I see what you mean, yes. The midazolam, I think perhaps that is a bit easier to read.

A Well, that looks like nine o'clock.

Q So that appears to be when the syringe driver was initiated.

A Yes.

G

Q What have you written underneath?

A I beg your pardon?

Q Have you written anything underneath when you have reduced the dose?

A On the drug chart you mean?

Q Yes, on the drug chart, which I thought you were looking at.

H

A I do not think I have written anything on the drug chart.

- A Q Can you tell us, please, at 16.40 what happens?
A Oh, "Dose discarded 40mg 16.40".
- Q Would that be as a result of your intervention?
A I presume so.
- B Q So at 16.40 effectively a new syringe driver is started?
A Yes.
- Q With your reduced dose. Did you give any consideration to the midazolam?
A I do not recollect doing so.
- Q You do not recollect it?
A No.
- C Q Just looking at that sheet in front of you, Dr Barton had prescribed, concentrating on midazolam, 20-80mg, and when the syringe driver was restarted it looks from our copy as if the midazolam was increased to 40 from 20.
A It does.
- D Q Can you help us as to how that happened?
A I have no idea.
- Q Would you have directed the increase?
A I would find that astonishing if I directed that increase.
- Q Why do you find it astonishing?
A Because when I saw the patient I thought the patient was over-sedated, and it would seem totally counter-intuitive to increase the dose of midazolam.
- E Q You have directly brought about the reduction in diamorphine?
A Yes.
- F Q Now, just stepping back from the drugs, and then we will take a break, this patient had continuing pain from her hip.
A Yes.
- Q You had directed that an X-ray take place in your clinical note of 7 April.
A Yes.
- G Q What did you want to happen with this patient?
A At what stage are you talking about?
- Q On 7 April when you intervened.
A Well, to have an X-ray to find if we could get to the bottom of why this lady was having so much pain.
- H Q An explanation of the two inch shortening of the leg?
A Yes.

A Q That does not appear to have happened.
A No.

Q By 12 April, when you come across this patient, you have found an unrousable patient.

A Yes.

B Q Can you recall if you made any enquiries about what had happened about your note?
A I cannot recall.

MR KARK: Sir, I think that is all that I need to ask about this patient, but I will review my notes, if I may, over the short adjournment.

C THE CHAIRMAN: We are going to break now for lunch. We will return at 5 minutes past 2. In the interim period, please remember that you remain on oath in the middle of your testimony and you should not discuss the case with any person nor allow any person to talk to you about the case. Thank you very much. 5 past 2, ladies and gentlemen.

(Luncheon adjournment)

D THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, everyone. Yes, Mr Kark.

MR KARK: There was just one more question I wanted to ask you about the previous patient. Do you still have the bundle in front of you, bundle I? We have seen what happened with this patient: the problems with the hip; the diamorphine that was prescribed, and then your reduction, yes?

A Yes.

E Q We know the patient died the following day.
A Yes.

Q If we go right to the back, please, to the death certificate, and you will find a little tab, and if you just turn over the final interlever, the cause of death is given as?

A Cerebrovascular accident.

F Q Where does that come from, as it were? What is that based upon, do you know?
A No.

Q Is there any indication of that that you have seen in this patient's terminal stage?

A No.

G Q Let us move on to the next patient. If you can put that file away, please. I want to ask you about Mr Geoffrey Packman. If you could take up file J. This gentleman we know, just to remind everybody, if we go back to 6 August, this is prior to you having any dealings with him, I think, the first note we have got for this gentleman, the easiest place to find it is page 47, we know that this gentleman was admitted to accident and emergency at Queen Alexandra Hospital on this date, 6 August.

A Yes.

H

A Q We can see that the problems are set out, and he has got cellulitis. Is that actually an infection?

A Yes, it is an infection of the skin and subcutaneous tissues.

Q Cellulitis in the left leg. He has got chronic leg oedema, poor mobility, morbid obesity, TBP?

A No, I think it is increased BP, which is increased blood pressure.

B

Q Oh, sorry, arrow up?

A I think so.

Q Then "AF", is that atrial fibrillation?

A That is correct.

C

Q Then if we go on to page 49, are either of those notes made by you?

A Yes, the first one.

Q The top one, 9 August.

A That is correct.

D

Q Can you just take us through that, please?

A Yes. "Cellulitis of [left] leg settling – switch to oral fluclox" – that is flucloxacillin.

Q Which is what?

A It is an antibiotic. "Oedema [left greater than right] foot – continue frusemide", which is a water tablet. "Arthritis of knees [left greater than right] +++ Arthritis of hips – mild [left greater than right] CNS intact Apyrexial BP [satisfactory] – continue felodipine but [reduce] to 2.5mg ([because of] oedema)".

E

Q I am sorry, what is that last entry all about?

A Felodipine is an agent which is used to control blood pressure, but one of its side effects is it causes swelling of the legs, and I have recorded in the third line of my note that Mr Packman had oedema with both feet, more so on the left side, so it was trying to get rid of that, because you are more at risk of having cellulitis if you have got edematous, swollen legs.

F

Q Below that we can see an entry which, I think, is not yours but we can see that the patient is described as being well.

"Cellulitis improving on antibiotics"

He is awaiting physiotherapy?

G

A Yes.

Q Over the page, page 50:

"Patient well.

Cellulitis improved on [antibiotics]

Continue physio

Apyrexial"

H

A

Apyrexial?

A Yes.

Q Meaning no temperature?

A No temperature.

B

Q Then again, just glancing through this quickly, the next entry is the same day:

“Clinically brighter.
Leg looking better marginally
Pressure sores being dressed

...

Continue nursing care as now and try to mobilise.”

A Yes.

Q Over to 13 August, please. I do not think this is your note, is it?

A No. It is Dr Code A.

D

Q I do not think we need to go through this in any detail. We can see much better than on admission; carry on with antibiotics, take them 10 days. That is on the middle of the page. Then, right at the bottom, do we see:

“Transfer to Dryad Ward on 16/8/99”

E

A Yes.

Q Page 52, the following page. I do not think he did get transferred on the 16th?

A No, I do not think he did.

Q I do not think your notes appear. Would you just look through the next couple of pages. I think it is most Dr Code A?

F

A Yes.

Q Is that right?

A Yes, and my colleague, Dr Tandy.

Q Can we then go, please, to page 55. This is 23 August. This is a note which we think is made by Dr Ravindrane?

G

A That is correct.

Q Dr Ravindrane worked where?

A He was a senior or specialist registrar who would be based at Queen Alexandra Hospital but at that time he was working with me and he would on occasion come out to Gosport with me.

H

A Q Are you able to help us. This is a note by him. Do you know where this assessment took place?

A I think it was at Gosport.

Q I think that accords with Dr Ravindrane's statement as well. It is just that the letter-headed paper, I do not think we have seen as coming from GWMH before.

A Sorry?

B

Q This is page 55.

A Yes.

Q Do you --- Sorry, go on.

A I was just going to say on the previous page it says "for Gosport" on the 23/08.

C

Q That would seem to indicate that although Dr Ravindrane was working at the QAH, this was an assessment which actually took place on the ward. That is Dryad?

A Yes.

Q Just looking through this, what is happening here? What is Dr Ravindrane doing?

A He has outlined the patient's problems and conducted an examination. Then he has written a plan at the bottom: repeat haemoglobin; I think it is urea and electrolytes, and liver function tests on Friday.

D

Q In terms of a note, just by way of example, you presumably have made many such notes in your time?

A Yes.

E

Q Is this an acceptable note of an assessment and examination?

A Yes.

Q And is that the sort of note that you have seen many times before?

A Yes.

Q And it describes what the patient's problems are. It describes what his present position is, and we see in the middle of the page is it "MTS"?

F

A "MTS = very good", I think it is. "No pain." I cannot read what ---

Q I think it is "Better in himself"?

A "Better in himself". I think the next bit is "0 JVP", which is jugular venous pulse, which is a clinical sign that we look at to tell whether someone might have heart failure.

G

Q And that would indicate that he is or is not in heart failure?

A Not in heart failure. Then the next line, I think, is "CDs [tick]", which means he thinks the cardio vascular system is unremarkable on examination. The next thing is "Rs", which is ticked.

Q "Rs"?

A Respiratory system.

H

Q So he is checking all the functions?

- A A Yes.
- Q Vital functions.
- A Then I think "PA" is the next thing.
- Q Then we see "Obese"?
- A It says "obese", and then, "Legs slightly..."
- B Q Oedematous?
- A Oedematous, yes. "Chronic skin change. Ulcers dressed yesterday."
- Q Do you have a recollection now of this patient?
- A No.
- C Q No.
- A Not really.
- Q We have heard that he was a very large gentleman?
- A Yes.
- Q With very bad ulcers, but that does not ring any bells with you?
- D A I have a vague recollection of a patient who when he was admitted to Ann Ward at Queen Alexandra Hospital, who was extremely obese and, if I remember correctly, and if it is Mr Packman, the nursing staff had to put two beds together to accommodate. That is the only real memory I have – if my memory serves me correctly.
- Q I think we go to some drug charts towards the back. Start at page 179, and then go backwards, as it were. We can see that the patient had been on paracetamol, which he declined at the Queen Alexandra Hospital on a number of occasions?
- E A Yes.
- Q Then could you go to 173. There is an entry in the middle for something called Clexane?
- A That is correct.
- F Q We can see, I think, that all of these drugs were prescribed on 23 August?
- A Yes.
- Q Do you see?
- A Yes.
- G Q It seems to be that these were prescriptions by Dr Ravindrane?
- A Yes.
- Q Do not say "yes" if you are not sure about it. Do you recognise this signature or not?
- A The first three certainly look like Dr Ravindrane's signature. I am not sure about the fourth.
- H Q In the middle of that page, we can see that a drug called Clexane was prescribed?
- A Yes.

A

Q Do you know what Clexane is for?

A Yes. It is what is called an anti-coagulant. It is used to prevent and treat deep venous thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.

Q That seems to have been prescribed for this patient and at some stage certainly administered?

B

A Yes.

Q The other drugs that we can see are doxazosin?

A Doxazosin, which is for high blood pressure.

Q Frusemide?

A Which is a diuretic, or water tablet.

C

Q And paracetamol?

A Pain killer.

Q And then, is that a cream?

A I think it is 50-50 cream. I am not sure what that is.

D

Q And the very last entry there?

A Is magnesium hydroxide, which is a laxative.

Q Again, I am afraid we are going to have to do this thing of keeping a finger where you are from the prescription charts and then going back to the clinical notes. Could you go back to page 56?

A Yes.

E

Q There is an entry right at the top there which I think is Dr Barton. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q

“Called to see”

F

is it –

“pale, clammy, unwell.
Suggest ? MI...”

Can you read the next words?

A Yes. It is –

G

“Treat stat diamorph and Oramorph overnight.
Alternative possibility GI bleed but not haematemesis
Not well enough to transfer to acute unit
Keep comfortable
I am happy for nursing staff to confirm death.”

H

- A Q In what circumstances would you expect those words to be used, the last sentence: "I am happy for nursing staff to confirm that"?
- A I think if you felt that someone was terminally ill.
- Q The suggestion of "MI" – myocardial infarction. What is a myocardial infarction?
- A It is a heart attack.
- B Q Are there circumstances where diamorphine can be an appropriate drug?
- A Oh yes, indeed.
- Q The reference to a GI bleed?
- A Yes.
- C Q Is that what you would call a differential diagnosis?
- A Yes.
- Q If this patient were having a GI bleed, as we may see in due course that is possible or even likely, is that a treatable event?
- A Potentially.
- D Q Potentially how? What would you do?
- A By transfusion, and then investigation of the cause which would usually be by what is called endoscopy. At endoscopy it is possible to carry out specialised treatments to try and stop bleeding, if that is felt to be the appropriate thing to do.
- Q Try and find out the cause of the bleed, presumably?
- A Yes.
- E Q And if you could treat it?
- A Yes.
- Q Of itself, is it inevitably a terminal event?
- A Not of itself.
- F Q Underneath this entry we have another entry, I think, from Dr Barton.
- "Remains poorly but comfortable. Please continue opiates over week-end."
- A Yes.
- G Q That entry on 26 August – can you keep a finger there, please, and then go to the drug charts at 174. Do we see that on 26 August Oramorph was prescribed?
- A Yes.
- Q I am going to ask for you to be given the original prescription sheet for this please, because I hope you will find the writing a bit easier to read. (Document handed to the witness) Do you see against the entry for diamorphine "40-200 mg"? There is an entry to when it was first administered?
- H A First administered on the 26th.

- A Q Do you see just above the word "Dose"?
- A Yes, 30?
- Q It says "30"?
- A Yes, yes. And then 31st, the following one, so I presume that refers to the day it was -
-
- B Q Actually administered?
- A Yes.
- Q The date above that appears to be the 26th?
- A The date of ---
- Q The date above that?
- A Yes. A lot of prescriptions.
- Q And you would take that to be the date of prescription?
- A Yes.
- Q And the prescription there was for diamorphine between 40 and 200 mg?
- A Yes.
- D Q And that is the sort of wide range – I will not ask you again – that you spoke about earlier?
- A Yes.
- Q You said you had not seen before?
- A Yes.
- E Q Or here, or since?
- A Yes.
- Q That starting dose of 40 mg, do you have any comment to make about that? Did you see that at the time or not?
- F A I think... I am sorry. The Oramorph starting dose – I beg your pardon. That is the prescription above – the Oramorph.
- Q No. The Oramorph had already started, I think.
- A But it had never been given.
- Q I think you are right. I think it had been prescribed on 26 August. Just give me a moment.
- G A I think it is over the page.
- THE CHAIRMAN: It is page 175, Mr Kark.
- MR KARK: I think the Oramorph had first been given, in fact, on the 27th, and it was ---
- THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, if you look on page 175, below the first row, there is a second Oramorph which in time is the first.
- H

- A
MR KARK: You are quite right. I am grateful. So there are two entries for Oramorph on page 175 and we can see that there is an initial, I think, under the 26th at 22.00 hours?
A Yes, yes.
- Q Can you help us with the dosage that was actually given?
A It looks like 20 mg.
- B
Q Thank you. In the clinical notes that we have been looking at, back at page 55, there is reference to the possibility of an MI - yes?
A Yes.
- Q There is no reference to pain?
A No.
- C
Q This patient, we know, was put onto a syringe driver?
A On the ---
- Q It was ---
A On the 30th.
- D
Q Actually administered, it was prescribed, as we have seen previously, but he was put onto it on the 30th at a rate of 40 mg?
A Yes.
- Q Can you just help us with this. Treating a myocardial infarction, if that is what was being done, is there a dose, a normal dose, that one would give for myocardial infarction, as opposed to for pain?
A Depending on the size of the patient - 2.5 to 5 mg. But this was a very large gentleman.
- E
Q Yes. So do you use what?
A It might have been up to 10 mg, an initial dose of diamorphine.
- Q To treat a myocardial infarction, if that is what the concern was, would you have used 40 mg?
A Usually with myocardial infarction you would give a single dose.
- F
Q Not a syringe driver?
A Not a syringe driver straight off.
- Q Staying on page 56, underneath the entry that we have been looking at do we see an entry for 1 September?
A Yes.
- G
Q Whose note is that?
A It is mine.
- H
Q Could you help us with it, please?
A

A "Rather drowsy, but comfortable.
Passing melaena stools
[Abdomen] huge, but quite soft.

Pressures sores over buttock and across the posterior aspect of both thighs

B Remains confused
For T.L.C. – stop frusemide and doxazosin
Wife aware of poor prognosis."

Q Can you help us, please, why you formed the view at that stage that you apparently did that this patient was effectively for palliative care?

A He was a very large man who had become immobile prior to admission. I think the final precipitant probably of his loss of mobility was his left leg cellulitis, but it was clear that this man had been struggling to remain mobile without any intercurrent illness prior to his admission to hospital. I have recorded in my earlier note that he had arthritis +++ of his knees, he had grade 4 pressure sores. My view is that this man was extremely unlikely ever to leave hospital and, probably worse than that, that this man's life expectancy was likely to be extremely limited. When I saw him, he was obviously having a very significant gastrointestinal bleed – that is the reference to passing melaena stools – and I felt that he was terminally ill.

D Q Had this problem been recognised earlier, could something have been done for him?
A Possibly, but I think it would be important to state that his pre-existing problems would remain. In other words, his arthritis, his grade 4 pressure sores and I think there was something else which I cannot bring it to mind.

E Q On 26 August, when she first made a note about seeing this patient, Dr Barton made her notes at the top of page 56 and appears to have prescribed on the same day Oramorph, diamorphine with a variable range and midazolam.
A Yes.

Q What do you say about that sort of prescription?

A I think without having seen the patient, it is difficult. If one is considering – this man was clearly unwell on 26 August, very unwell, and I think to give diamorphine was an appropriate measure. Given his multiple problems, I would have felt that this man's prognosis for life was extremely poor and I feel at that stage that he might well have needed regular Oramorph and diamorphine in the next few days.

F Q Is that the sort of prescription you are saying you would have written?
A No, no. I am talking about diamorphine.

G Q What I am asking you about this prescription, this range of prescriptions on 26 August: midazolam, Oramorph, diamorphine with a range of 40 to 200. Is that a prescription you would have written?

A I would not have written a prescription for diamorphine 40 to 200 or midazolam 20 to 80.

H Q You would not?
A No.

A

Q Why not?

A Because I think the range is too great.

Q When you saw the patient on 1 September, you described him as drowsy.

A Yes.

B

Q Does that indicate to you the appropriateness or otherwise of the degree of sedation?

A It may be entirely appropriate, because it is sometimes not possible to relieve a patient's distress without them becoming drowsy.

Q That depends I suppose on the degree of pain.

A Or distress.

C

Q Is there any reference to distress or pain?

A In Dr Barton's first note, she refers to him being "pale, clammy and unwell." Often when people are clammy, they can feel pretty unwell and distressed. Often if people are unwell, they become clammy and be feeling distressed.

Q They may be distressed presumably or they may not be distressed. Do you see any note of pain or distress?

D

A No, I do not see any note of pain or distress.

Q Can we move on, please, to the next patient, Patient K, Elsie Devine, and could you take up file K? First of all, can you help the Panel by telling us whether you have any independent recollection of this patient?

A Not really. I remember meeting her daughter, but I do not have a very clear recollection of Mrs Devine.

E

Q Could you go to page 155, please? This patient, as we see at the top of the page, had been transferred to Dryad Ward for continuing care.

A Yes.

Q She had been through Mulberry Ward, as we can see at the top, then went to the Queen Alexandra and then to Dryad.

F

A Yes.

Q Then there is a record by Dr Barton. Did you see the patient on 25 October?

A Yes.

Q Can you help us, please, with what you found?

G

A Yes.

"Mobile unaided
 Washes with supervision
 Dresses self
 Continent
 Mildly confused
 Blood pressure 110/70

H

- A Normochromic anaemia – chronic renal failure.
- Was living with daughter and son-in-law
? son-in-law awaiting bone marrow transplant
Need to find out more re son-in-law etc.”
- B Q We have heard quite a bit about this patient, but “mobile unaided” and “dresses self” seem to be an indication that certainly physically she was fairly comfortable.
A At that time, yes.
- Q I just want you to help us, please, with the drugs that this lady was being administered. Could you go to the prescription charts, starting at page 279C? We can see I think that the patient was on thyroxine, which is obviously to treat hyperthyroidism.
- C A Yes.
- Q Frusemide.
A Yes.
- Q For what?
A It is usually used for cardiac failure and sometimes used for ankle swelling.
- D Q And amiloride, is it?
A Yes. That is used for cardiac failure too.
- Q Trimethoprim, is it?
A Trimethoprim is an antibiotic.
- E Q Underneath that, although that is rather later, we can see fentanyl.
A That is right.
- Q I think also in fact that at this time there was also a prescription for Oramorph. If we go to page 279B, do we see that on 21 October there was a prescription for Oramorph?
A Yes.
- F Q Can we go back to the clinical notes? Your note was made on 25 October. The next note in the clinical notes is what?
A I think it is 1 November, which is my note.
- Q That appears to be the next note sequentially.
A Yes.
- G Q Can you read it through for us, please?
A Yes.
- “Physically independent but
needs supervision with washing and dressing
help with bathing
Continent
- H Quite confused and disorientated

- A Eg, undressing during the day.
Is unlikely to get much social support at home.
Therefore try home visit to see if functions better in own home.”
- B Q There is no note between 25 October and 1 November. If the patient’s condition had not changed, would you necessarily expect there to be any note?
A No.
- Q Again, going back to the drug charts, please, a drug called chlorpromazine was issued. If we go to page 279B, we can see right at the top chlorpromazine was given.
A Yes.
- C Q Can you tell us, please, what chlorpromazine was used for?
A It is a tranquilliser.
- Q That sort of dosage of chlorpromazine of 50 mg?
A A substantial dose.
- D Q If we go to 15 November, back to the clinical notes at page 156, we can see that apparently there had been something of a change in the patient’s condition.
A Yes.
- Q This is not your note, I do not think.
A It is.
- E Q I am sorry. Before we go through the note, where are you getting this information from?
A From the nursing staff or Dr Barton, if she was present on the ward round.
- Q So this is not obviously based on what you have seen of her?
A No.
- F Q Can you just take us through your note, please?
A Yes.
“Very aggressive at times
Very restless – has needed thioridazine”
Which is another sedative drug, tranquilliser rather.
- G “On treatment for [urinary tract infection] – MSU sent”
That is a mid-stream specimen of urine because of blood and protein in the urine.
“[On examination] Pulse – 100/regular
Temperature 36.4
[Jugular venous pressure not elevated]
HJR ...”
- H

A This is hepato jugular reflux. It is a test of whether someone might be in heart failure. It was negative.

“Oedema +++ to thighs
[heart sounds] – nil added”

B Meaning the patient had normal sounds –

“Chest clear
Bowels regular – PR”

That means “per rectum”; a rectal examination had been done on 13 November 1999.

C “ ... empty
but good bowel actions since.”

Then in brackets an asterisk with “MSU – no growth”. What that probably reflects is that a member of the nursing staff had gone off and found the result of the specimen of urine and it said there was no growth.

D “Asked Dr [Code A] to see.”

Dr [Code A] is a consultant in old age psychiatry.

Q The fact that this lady appears to have a UTI or consideration for a UTI, is that something that would normally be noted in these clinical notes, or not? It has been noted by you obviously.

E A Yes, ideally, but urinary tract infections are quite common and it certainly often would be my experience in the past that people have not recorded things like a urinary tract infection in the notes because it is thought to be relatively minor, but it should be in ideal circumstances.

Q If we look at the note underneath yours, is that a sort of referral?

A Yes.

F

Q It is a referral written in the clinical notes.

A Yes.

Q That is to [Code A], who I think is the doctor that you have just been referring to.

A Yes.

G

Q That says:

“Thank you so much for seeing Elsie. I gather she is well known to you.”

Can you read it any better than we can?

A I think it is:

H

A "Her confusional state has increased in the last few days to the point where we are using thioridazine."

Q That is the sedative that you have referred to, is it?

A Yes.

B Q Then there is a reference to her renal function.
A Yes.

"Her renal function is deteriorating. Her MSU showed no growth. Can you help? Many thanks."

Q The patient I think in fact continues on thioridazine. It is administered, according to the drug charts – and I will lead you on this, if I may – on 17 November in the afternoon.

C A Yes.

Q Then if we go to the top of page 157, can I ask you this? We have seen your two notes on the 1st and the 15th. If a patient deteriorated, first of all, would you be available to be spoken to by Dr Barton if she required any assistance?

A Yes. I might not be immediately available, but I should be available.

D Q Was that your role?
A To be available, yes.

Q And to give advice if it was needed.
A If Dr Barton felt she wanted advice, yes.

E Q Then at the top of page 157, we can see:
"Elderly Mental Health

Thank you. This lady has deteriorated and has become more restless and aggressive again. She is refusing medication. She does not seem to be depressed and her physical condition is stable."

F Yes?
A Yes, I think that is what it says.

Q Then I think it is:

"I will arrange for her to go on the waiting list for Mulberry Ward."

G Mulberry Ward we have heard quite a bit about. It was the elderly psychiatric ward.
A Yes.

Q The next note is made by Dr Barton. You at the time did not have any dealings at this period of time.

A No further contact after that last note.

H

A Q I just want to ask you one matter about this. If we look at the next note made by Dr Barton on 19 November:

“Marked deterioration overnight
Confused, aggressive. Creatinine 360
Fentanyl patch commenced yesterday
Today further deterioration in general condition.”

B In what circumstances to your knowledge is a fentanyl patch be appropriately used?

A For a patient who is in pain and/or distress.

Q Pain or distress.

A Yes. I think its licence indication is for pain, but, like diamorphine and opiates, they are often used where it is unclear as to whether the patient’s distress is physical or mental or a combination of both.

C Q Where a doctor has taken the decision to place a patient on opiates - and fentanyl is an opiate, is it not?

A Yes.

D Q Is that something that you would or would not expect a note to be made in a clinical record, the reasoning behind it?

A Yes, I would expect a note to be made of the reason for it being started.

Q We can see that the note on 19 November finishes – I think it is “Please make comfortable. Am happy for nursing staff to confirm death”.

A Dr Barton has written “Confused and aggressive”, which is clearly someone who is distressed.

E Q If we go to page 281 – have you got the original prescription sheet still? Have you got it?

A I am not sure.

F Q If you pass the file to us we can find it for you and hand it back. (Same handed) (After a pause) You are going to have the file handed back to you. (Same handed) If you would like to take the prescription sheet out. I just want to concentrate on the drugs that were prescribed and administered on 19 November. Now, I am afraid I cannot tell you where it will be on the original, but you will find at the very bottom of one of the pages, I think, an entry for fentanyl.

A Yes.

G Q We have that on our 279c. We have already looked at 279b, which is 19 November, chlorpromazine.

A Yes.

Q Then we can look, our page 281, at diamorphine 40mg and midazolam 40mg.

A Yes. Midazolam 20-80mg.

H Q Yes, but actually it was 40, was it not?

A Started on 40.

- A
- Q Started on 40. So on 19 November, it appears, in the morning at least, that this patient had in her system fentanyl, chlorpromazine, midazolam, diamorphine. Is that the sort of prescribing that you would ever have written out?
- A I think I would have been more cautious in my use of diamorphine and midazolam.
- B
- Q More cautious?
- A Yes.
- Q How much more cautious?
- A Well, I am not an expert in opiate prescribing and fentanyl in particular, and what I would have wanted to do is make reference to the *British National Formulary* to see---
- C
- Q I was just going to ask you that: you have said on a number of occasions that you are not an expert in prescribing, opiate prescribing particularly.
- A Yes.
- Q Would you have had reference to the *BNF*?
- A Would I?
- D
- Q Yes. Would you have followed the guidance?
- A Yes.
- Q Do you say you did not see these prescriptions? Sorry, you are shaking your head.
- A Sorry. No, I did not see them.
- E
- Q If you just give me a moment, please. (After a pause) You told us about your view so far as the clinical notes are concerned of recording the use of fentanyl. What do you say about the necessity or otherwise of recording the prescription and the use of the other opiate drugs?
- A I think the change should have been recorded.
- F
- Q Can I finally just ask you this: you have got the original prescription sheets in front of you.
- A Yes.
- Q Can you just take one up, and it may be if you use this as an example. Throughout these prescription sheets in relation to the patients that we have been dealing with on Dryad Ward, the three patients that you have been talking about, Dr Barton has prescribed a wide variable dose, yes?
- A Yes.
- G
- Q Can you explain why you did not see those?
- A I mean, I must have seen them, but I do not recollect seeing them.
- Q If you saw them, why did you not take action about them?
- A Well, I should have done.
- H
- MR KARK: I see. Would you wait there, please.

A THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have reached the point where we should give the doctor a break. He has had an hour of examination in-chief. So we are going to break now. You will be taken somewhere where you can get some refreshment, and we will return, please, at quarter-past three, everybody. Thank you.

(The Panel adjourned for a short time)

B THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, everyone. Mr Langdale.

Cross-examined by MR LANGDALE

Q Dr Reid, obviously I am asking you questions on behalf of Dr Barton, you will appreciate that.

A Yes.

C Q I have quite a number of matters to ask you about. What I will try to do is to ask you about general matters first of all, to seek your assistance about various points, touching upon points you may have already mentioned yourself, but I am inviting you to flesh them out and so on, and then towards the end of my cross-examination I will turn to the individual patients you have been asked about. It may be that at times we will come back to a particular topic, but I will try and keep it in that sort of order. First of all, this: you have described in your own statement, and I quoting your words, that you thought Jane Barton was a good doctor.

D A Yes.

Q I would like you to flesh that out a little bit more. Why do you say that?

E A Well, I felt that she was assiduous in attention to her duties when working at War Memorial Hospital. I obviously was only there for one afternoon per week, and, in situations like that, one often relies on the nursing staff for feedback about how a doctor is performing, and the nursing staff were, I would say, fulsome in their praise for the support that Dr Barton offered them. I never ever heard it suggested that Dr Barton had not attended or been unhelpful in giving advice. She was a great source of support to the nursing staff, and I felt the patients were being well looked after.

Q So I think it follows, from what you have been asked and the remark you made, that you were not somebody who had concerns about the standard of nursing care, and you were not somebody who had concerns about the standard of medical care?

F A That is correct.

Q Did you also, so far as you could get the picture, whether from others or your own observations, form any conclusion about Dr Barton's attention to the needs of relatives?

G A I mean, I think that is difficult to answer, because I was, as I say, there once a week, but certainly what I am aware of is that Dr Barton did come in in her own time to speak to relatives.

Q I think at one point in the voluminous records we have of things that have said, either by way of interview with the police or your evidence at the inquest, that the impression you got was that she did a lot of counselling and advising of relatives.

A I certainly know she would see relatives at the request of the nursing staff.

H Q Did she on any occasion seek your advice about things?

A A I would say on three or four occasions during the year perhaps Dr Barton sought my advice.

Q You have indicated to the Panel that Dr Barton was more experienced than you were in certain areas, is that right?

A Yes.

B Q It nonetheless remains the case, does it not, that she was, as it were, responsible to you?

A Indeed.

Q You were the person whom she was entitled to expect would correct her if she was doing something wrong.

A Yes.

C

Q She was entitled to expect that you would advise her and guide her if you felt that she needed advice and guidance.

A Yes.

Q In general approaches to care and a whole range of other matters.

A Yes.

D

Q I think also it follows from what you have already told us that if you thought something was wrong about her practice, or something which ought to be corrected or amended, you would say so?

A Yes.

E

Q It was not as if you hesitated to exercise your proper supervisory duties?

A No.

Q Obviously there were a number of pressures on Dr Barton.

A Yes.

F

Q She was working as a clinical assistant to deal with the needs of a number of patients in two wards, Daedalus and Dryad.

A Yes.

Q Obviously her duties with regard to, whenever she could, seeing relatives, another aspect.

A Yes.

G

Q Somebody who had far from unlimited time in order to carry out those duties.

A Indeed.

Q It is not her fault; that was the fault of the way the thing was set up.

A Yes.

H

Q It is not obviously your fault, but would it be right to think of both of you, different roles, because no doubt you were under pressure as well, and I will come to that in a moment,

A both of you endeavouring to perform your respective roles as best you could in the circumstances you found yourselves?

A Yes.

Q The Panel have already heard about the comparatively limited amount of time that she had in order to perform her functions - I do not think there is any dispute about it, so I need not trouble you with that - but you knew that she came in and did a morning round, or check, every morning Monday to Friday?

B A Yes.

Q You knew that also she would come back, usually in the middle of the day, and hopefully also be available for you when you did your ward rounds?

A Yes.

C Q Also, that she was somebody who would attend on occasion, not necessarily every day but on occasion, later on in the day perhaps to see relatives, or whatever it might be?

A Yes.

Q A significant number of patients to attend to on the two wards.

A Yes.

D Q Patients in general terms who presented with a number of different problems.

A Yes.

Q May I just ask you, while we are dealing with that, about the state on the wards? I appreciate you can assist us with Dryad, a well run ward and all the rest of it, there is no dispute about that, but just the general nature of the patients? Do we have a picture of everybody just sort of sitting around, or lying in their beds peacefully and not doing anything? What is the general picture in terms of patients with dementia and so on?

E A Well, it would be a very sort of mixed picture. There would clearly be some patients who would be extremely dependent and probably presented a heavy nursing burden, but in terms of medical attention did not require very much, and that was the predominate population, as I understand it, when the ward was established, but that gradually changed so that, as I have said before, patients of increasing dependency, and by that I mean in terms of getting someone out of bed involves more effort than nursing someone who is usually confined to bed. Also, because the patients were probably being transferred at an earlier stage than had been previously done, they would have been more likely to be medically unstable than they had been in the past, or develop medical problems while they were there. So in that sense I think the workload medically certainly increased, and I would suspect that the nursing workload did too, because what we tried to do when we were presented with patients who we felt did need some physiotherapy and occupational therapy we managed to negotiate they would at least be assessed by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist, but the nursing staff would have to try and carry out what the physios had recommended.

G Q You have already spoken about the problems that might exist with patients who just were not able to cope with that, for example patients suffering from dementia and so on, but there really were not any facilities for physiotherapy on Dryad?

A No.

H

A Q I also want to ask you about the difficulties that might arise with regard to nursing with patients suffering from dementia and so on. Might they present problems in terms of--
A Well, indeed; restlessness, confusion, et cetera.

Q Different people seem to use different expressions but I think you probably covered the spectrum in a very general sense. Can I just ask you about the pressures on you yourself?
A Yes.

B Q You were under quite a lot of pressure?
A Yes.

Q You had not only your role as a consultant, which you described, but you were also, I think you told us, the medical director of the Plymouth Healthcare Trust?
A Portsmouth Healthcare Trust.

C Q I am sorry – not Plymouth. Portsmouth. That no doubt took up a certain amount of your time?
A A very substantial proportion.

D Q And there was a further pressure, again which you said something about but I would like you to expand on this a little, in terms of the desire of the two main hospitals we are concerned with, obviously – Queen Alexandra and the Haslar – the desire to move, and I do not mean in some frightful, inhumane sense, but the desire to move on patients as quickly as possible to free up beds on acute wards?
A That is correct.

E Q No doubt a pressure felt in many other places in the country, but what is the effect of that in terms of the impact on Dryad?
A I think that it meant that patients who were not wholly suitable for transfer to Dryad Ward were transferred.

F Q Can I ask you about that by way of enlargement on what you have told us. Did you find in your experience that the hospital sending the patient on to Dryad, seeking and obtaining the transfer to Dryad, was sometimes presenting a slightly rosier picture of the patient's general medical stability?
A Yes.

Q And how would that manifest itself. We have come across one example already, I think, in what you said, but in general terms how did that show itself?
A Because of the interest in moving patients on from specialty wards they would make light of, perhaps, new medical problems that had developed. So, for example, if someone was being transferred from a cardiology ward who had had a stroke, they did not necessarily say, "This patient has had a stroke." What often happened was there was a considerable delay between my colleagues and I assessing a patient on an acute ward and them being transferred – up to three weeks.

G Q I am sorry. So first of all the gap between your assessment and the actual transfer - yes?
H A Yes. And as a result the patient's condition had often changed in that time, but because we had accepted the patient and they are on the waiting list, the wards were only too

A happy to let the patient come and perhaps not be as forthcoming as they perhaps ought to have been about the problems the patient had, at the time of transfer.

Q It would not necessarily be a surprise – I appreciate it depends individual patient to individual patient – if the assessment and view of a patient arriving on Dryad would be different from the transfer letter assessment?

A Oh, quite different on occasion.

B

Q I am leaving aside the question that in some patients, as we have already heard, there might in fact be a deterioration as a result of the very transfer itself?

A Yes.

Q Which is something, again, you would be familiar with?

A Yes.

C

Q As a possibility. I think it follows from what you have said already, that would have a knock-on effect with regard, for example, to the prospects of mobilising a patient for rehabilitation generally?

A If patients had had an intercurrent illness develop in the interim, then that could clearly prejudice any chances of rehabilitation. Also, there was a tendency for staff on other wards to say things to relatives like, “We’ll transfer to the War Memorial and they will soon have her walking in no time”, in the interests of encouraging the transfer and persuading the relatives to accept the transfer.

D

Q So an effect, is on the expectation, as it were ---

A Absolutely.

E

Q --- of the relatives. Are we talking about a minor problem or a real problem, or what?

A Sometimes a very significant problem.

Q How would those manifest themselves?

A Patients or relatives being told that they were coming to the War Memorial Hospital for rehabilitation when the reality would be that on assessment the chances of rehabilitation were remote.

F

Q How might that manifest itself in terms of the relatives feeling towards the staff?

A Dissatisfaction, concern and, not unnaturally, relatives want to listen to the more optimistic prognosis.

Q I think around 1999, and that is really the period we are concentrating on so far as you are concerned ---

A Yes.

G

Q Around 1999. It was not the practice to have any staff reviews or regular supervision?

A No.

Q Again, lack of resources. Is that what we put that down to?

A No. Appraisal was not compulsory at that time – the sort of appraisal I am talking about, medical staff appraisal.

H

A Q But in terms of supervision by consultants, were there constraints upon that or not?
A In terms of time, yes.

Q May I just ask you this in a general sense, about what you would expect as a consultant with regard to a decision made by the clinical assistant, in this case Dr Barton – obviously the only real person at the time we are concerned about. Would you expect or would you not expect to be informed by the clinical assistant if the position had changed with regard to a patient?

B A No. I would only expect her to contact me if she had significant concerns about that change.

Q Would you expect or not expect contact with you if Dr Barton decided the time had come for a patient to receive analgesia subcutaneously, in other words via a syringe driver?

A No, I would not have expected that.

C Q Or, as another illustration, Dr Barton deciding that it was appropriate for to record the fact that she was happy for nursing staff to verify or confirm death?

A Sorry. Could you just repeat that.

Q Would it be something you would expect or not expect, for Dr Barton to contact you about in terms of her concluding that she wanted to record the fact that she was happy for nursing staff to verify or confirm – whichever word was used – death?

D A No. I would not have expected her to do that.

Q I want to ask you more than one thing about prescribing practice by Dr Barton, but I am going to try and deal with it in sections. I appreciate they may slightly blur, the one into the other. What has been described as anticipatory prescribing?

A Yes.

E Q What do you understand by that expression?

A It is prescribing of a medication and for someone who does not require the medication at that particular moment, but in whom one might reasonably anticipate they would need in a shortish timeframe.

Q That is something that you knew Dr Barton did?

F A Yes.

Q And I may have misunderstood you. Were you also saying that Queen Alexandra, for example, anticipatory prescribing takes place?

A It does at Queen Alexandra Hospital but just, perhaps, in relation to the last question, I cannot remember a specific incident of Dr Barton engaging in participatory prescribing, but I think there are occasions when it is appropriate.

G Q Was there any occasion when you spoke to Dr Barton – again, I want to make sure we are talking about the same thing – was there any occasion when you spoke to Dr Barton about anticipatory prescribing?

A I do not recollect ever doing that.

H Q Because you have told us that you did have a conversation with her about the principle, I think, of variable doses?

- A A That is correct.
- Q So we are talking about something different when we are talking about anticipatory prescribing?
- A Indeed.
- B Q But had you been aware of Dr Barton prescribing in anticipation ---?
- A Yes.
- Q Assuming it is not absolutely barmy, but reasonable anticipation, as it were, you would have been perfectly happy with that practice?
- A Yes.
- C Q Then can I turn to variable doses, as to what we are talking about, because you indicated that before you came on to Dryad, in the sense of becoming the consultant and therefore taking on Dryad, you had possibly had experience of variable doses of diamorphine, maybe on one or two occasions, but you had a discussion with Dr Barton about this topic. What was it you were raising with her?
- A It was why she was engaged in variable dose prescribing – larger range variable dose prescribing.
- D Q What do we mean by “larger range variable dose prescribing”?
- A The recollection I have was this was in the context of a patient who had been prescribed 20 to 80 mg of diamorphine.
- Q So are we talking about two different things, or the same thing? I just want to make sure. Variable dose, in the sense that there is a range, or are we talking about variable doses also meaning a range which is quite wide?
- E A Sorry. Could you repeat that?
- Q If there is a range of a dose ---
- A Yes?
- Q --- whether it is 10 to 20, or 20 to 200, is that what we are talking about in terms of a variable dose?
- F A Yes.
- Q Right. The fact that there is not a set amount to be administered to the patient?
- A Yes.
- Q But there is a range?
- A Yes.
- G Q All right? So by variable prescription we are talking about something where the doctor has prescribed a range for a particular drug to be administered?
- A Yes.
- Q And the example you had had in mind, or your recollection is ---
- H A My recollection.

A Q When you spoke to Dr Barton – I appreciate all the difficulties remembering exactly – was that it involved a variable dose prescription?

A Yes.

Q The diamorphine?

A Yes.

B Q With a range ---?

A Yes.

Q --- which you recall as being, I think you said ---

A 20 to 80.

Q 20 to 80?

C A That is my recollection.

Q And she gave you an explanation?

A Yes.

Q And it was an explanation which satisfied you?

A Yes.

D

Q Again, in general terms – I am not expecting you to remember every word she used, and I doubt very much if she could ever remember, but what in general was her explanation which she gave you?

A As I recall, she stated that at times it was difficult for her, or her partners, to be in immediate attendance and particularly so at a week-end when she or her partners could be visiting patients as part of the on-call GP arrangements. And she had done this so that patients would not have to wait and suffer as a result of nursing staff being unable to contact her or her partners.

E

Q Would you help, please, with the importance of that fact – the desire to prevent patients unnecessarily suffering?

A Indeed.

F Q Where does that rate in importance in the scale of things?

A It is the overriding priority.

Q Because we are dealing with patients who were not patients on an acute ward recovering immediately from an operation, we are dealing with a different class of patient?

A Yes.

G Q For continuing care patients, palliative care patients, would it be right to say that the relief of pain and suffering has a particular importance?

A Yes.

Q Would it be right to say in general terms that the level of pain tolerated on an acute ward would be rather higher than the level of pain tolerated on a continuing care ward?

A Sorry. I do not follow.

H

A Q We have seen cases, for example, if we take the example of one particular patient, the lady with the hip.

A Yes.

Q On paracetamol, I think it was?

A Yes.

B Q After her operation?

A Yes.

Q Although obviously still in pain?

A Yes.

C Q Is concern about controlling the level of pain rather less on an acute ward than it is in terms of continuing care?

A I am not sure....

Q You do not see any difference or you do?

A I am not sure that I see any difference.

D THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Langdale, I am sorry to interrupt at this point, but I need to say something that perhaps I should have said at an earlier stage. It is this. We, as a Panel, are acutely aware of the stresses and strains that come with the giving of evidence. We understand how very rapidly a witness can feel exhausted. It is very important that we receive evidence from you at a time when you are feeling fit and fresh enough to apply your mind fully. If at any time you feel that it is getting a bit much, and you need to take a break, or even that you have had enough for the day, you only have to indicate, and you will not be required to go on answering questions.

E THE WITNESS: Thank you very much, but I feel fine.

THE CHAIRMAN: Good. Okay – thank you.

F MR LANGDALE: You can feel fortunate, Dr Reid, that counsel are not allowed the same latitude, whatever they feel about the amount of questions they have to ask.

Just on that topic, I was putting that general proposition to you that in general on an acute ward, somebody recovering from an operation, there may be less attention to the problem of controlling pain – I do not mean in the sense of ignoring it – than there would be in terms of patients on continuing care ward?

A I think if you mean because in an acute ward there are some junior medical staff 24 hours a day, absolutely, whereas in a ward like dry ward, we are dependent on GPs out of hours cover. It is a different situation.

G Q That again brings me on to something I wanted to explore with you as well – that different situation, and the realities of endeavouring to care for patients on a continuing care ward like Dryad – patients coming in, maybe, for continuing care; coming in, in effect, for palliative care almost from the start and that sort of category of patient. Would it be right to consider that there is a balancing exercise that has to be carried out by ---?

H A Absolutely.

A

Q We will start off with one obvious balancing exercise, and that is the question of note-taking?

A Yes.

B

Q You should know that there is no dispute on behalf of Dr Barton that her note-taking was not adequate; it was not as good as it should have been.

A Yes.

C

Q It may be that in the 1990s the standard of note-taking by GPs, by other doctors, was rather lower than it is now in general terms?

A Yes. Before I came to Portsmouth, I worked in Southampton, where we had a four-ward continuing care type rehabilitation hospital, for which we had a GP in a similar role as Dr Barton. His notes were equally brief. I know from colleagues who worked in other community hospitals in Portsmouth – I am talking in general terms – note-keeping was much briefer than it is now.

D

Q In any event, you would be aware of the brevity of her note-taking, but there was no occasion on which you thought it necessary to speak to her about it by way of pulling her up about it?

A No.

E

Q May I just ask you this as well. Was there ever any occasion when you had any difficulty understanding what the position was with regard to a patient as a result of the brevity of Dr Barton's notes?

A Never, I would see part of my role in the ward round as not just talking to medical staff that were present, but asking the nursing staff about what was happening, because medical staff cannot be there all the time. One is heavily reliant on nursing staff for information.

F

Q Again, give us an idea of how important that was to you, reliance on the information from the nursing staff?

A Critical. Critically important.

G

Q May I ask you this in general terms, about the nursing staff on Dryad. You told us about the standard of care, and I am not going into that again, but in terms of whether you felt you could trust the nursing staff to perform their duties properly?

A Without question. I said earlier that I was very impressed by the quality of the nursing staff we had on Dryad Ward.

H

Q When you asked Dr Barton about the rationale or the reason for the variable dose, and she explained to you what the reason was, as I understand it, you yourself did not have any concerns that there was any real risk that a member of the nursing staff would suddenly do something absurd, and just up the dose by some ridiculous extent?

A Yes, I trusted the nursing staff.

Q Again, dealing with the problems that existed by virtue of the set-up – not Dr Barton's fault and not your fault – and the balance that had to be carried out, the balance between, "Do I spend time taking fuller notes or do I spend time attending to patients?" that is the choice, because that is really what it comes down to, is it not?

- A A At times the pressure can be very difficult.
- Q Where do you think the balance lay between spending time writing up more ample notes or time spent looking after patients?
- A Oh, it has clearly to be with seeing patients.
- B Q Because of that problem, with Dr Barton not being there save for the limited periods of time we have already discussed, there is a problem with what one does about making a decision as to what should be the starting dose for a particular drug. We are focusing on opiates here obviously. Would you agree?
- A You have to make a judgment. There are guidelines about what the starting dose should be, but you have to make a judgment about the patient in front of you.
- C Q If you have a fully medically staffed ward, in the sense of somebody being available, as it were, all day, medical staff available all day, it is much easier to take an approach with regard to the administration of opiates which is bit by bit, a gradualist approach.
- A Yes.
- Q That luxury is not afforded if the doctor cannot be there save for limited periods of time in the day.
- A That is correct.
- D Q So it would not be a surprise to find a doctor in those circumstances prescribing higher than might otherwise be the case if the doctor was there all day.
- A Or certainly prescribing a wider range.
- Q Or a wider range. But there is a difficulty, if the starting dose is too low, that the patient, when the time comes to start on the opiate, will have suffered unnecessary pain.
- E A Yes.
- Q How would you assess the importance or the significance of the doctor's own judgment about this, the doctor who has seen the patient and knows what the situation is?
- A It is critical.
- F Q Was Dr Barton somebody in your experience of her who made medical judgments with little or no reason behind them?
- A I would have said not.
- Q There therefore has to be a balance struck, perhaps with the patient in the middle, but a balance struck between nursing and medical care dealing with the problem with the patient in terms of pain control and the pharmacological approach.
- G A Indeed.
- Q Requiring judgment. Yes?
- A Yes.
- Q How would you weigh the significance of experience in this field? Is that something which counts for much or little or how do you see it?
- H A Considerable.

A Q In your experience, would it not be surprising to find two doctors, perfectly genuinely, perfectly sensibly, coming to a different conclusion as to what the appropriate dose was with regard to the administration of opiates?

A Yes, it could happen.

Q One doctor might say, "I think in the circumstances 20 is about the right starting point." Another might say 10.

B A Yes.

Q Another might say 40.

A Yes.

Q As long as there is a sensible reason for prescribing a particular drug at a particular dose range or limit, then that course is justified.

C A Yes.

Q Still on the same topic of pressures that people were under, you have told the Panel about the change with regard to patients, the type of patient and so on, and the increasing pressures both on medical staff and nursing staff. I think there came a time in the early part of 2000 when you had a conversation with Dr Barton about the pressures.

A Yes.

D Q We know that there came a time when Dr Barton handed in her resignation.

A Yes.

Q Without going into unnecessary detail, that was because of the pressures which had been put upon her in terms of demands on her time and the expectations and the reality of the situation she faced.

E A Yes.

Q Indeed – and again it was probably not your decision, although you may have been involved in discussions about it – a decision was taken by the management side that what was needed was a full-time doctor.

A Yes.

F Q Again, I am not worried about all the details, but would you assist the Panel with what came into place after Dr Barton had resigned and left because of the pressures she was under?

A Yes. They appointed a full-time clinical assistant who was working 9 to 5 and Dr Barton's role then was covering 44 beds. Today it is actually 30 beds. It is covered by two junior doctors, plus half an associate specialist's time. So we have two and a half doctors looking after fewer beds.

G Q Immediately after she left, there was one full-time doctor.

A That is correct.

Q It may be stretching your recollection too far, I do not know, but what was done in terms of night-time and weekends, when that doctor would not actually have been there? Was there some kind of on-call arrangement?

H A Yes. There was an arrangement made I think with one of the local practices to cover all of – I cannot recall.

- A
- Q But we can think in terms of there being some sort of cover at the times when, am going to call it the 9 to 5 doctor, although that may be unfair, was not available.
- A Yes. Perhaps if I might illustrate that. If I remember correctly, while Dr Barton was in post, there would be approximately about 40 out of hours calls per month to Dr Barton and her partners. After we appointed a full-time clinical assistant, I think it dropped to four.
- B
- Q Still on the same topic, with regard to the provision of services by consultants when Dr Barton resigned, did that remain the same or did that change?
- A I think that remained the same.
- Q While we are on the question of consultants, Dr Tandy was not in post when you started on Dryad. Is that right?
- A She was in post before. I took over from Dr Tandy.
- C
- Q You were not there at the same time.
- A No.
- Q Dr Lord was of course a consultant.
- A Yes.
- D
- Q How did you find Dr Lord in terms of her ability and experience?
- A Extremely capable and likeable and just a lovely person.
- Q I think it is right that you – obviously not only you yourself, but also Dr Lord – were very grateful to Dr Barton for the services and work that she had provided?
- A Absolutely.
- E
- Q Was there an occasion, even if you cannot remember the exact details, when a complaint was made? I make the point now, it was nothing to do any of the 12 patients that the Panel are considering, but a complaint was made about a patient who had been on morphine tablets and those morphine tablets or the administration of them was discontinued by Dr Barton.
- A That is correct.
- F
- Q And the patient was put on less strong medication.
- A Yes.
- Q What did that produce in terms of the family or the relatives' position?
- A It produced a complaint.
- Q Because?
- G A Because they felt the patient's pain was not being adequately controlled.
- Q I am not going to go into any more detail of that. Do remember when about that was? Was that 1999?
- A I would think it was in 1999.
- H
- Q There was another complaint relating to a patient – again, not one of our 12 – who had developed heart failure on a Friday – this is again from information which you have disclosed

- A – when Dr Barton had prescribed morphine. That was quite appropriate in your opinion in that case.
- A Indeed. It was someone who was in acute heart failure.
- Q But you saw the patient yourself the following Monday and you took a decision to do what?
- A To stop it, because the patient was better.
- B
- Q A further point in relation to transfers which I did not ask you about at the time we were talking about transfers. Would you assist with the question of notes being available with patients? We have seen examples of transfer letters and so on and you have told the Panel about how they might not present a very realistic picture. Not in every case, but they might not. In terms of the patients' notes, what did you find on transfer was a common occurrence?
- C
- A Missing notes, incomplete notes, no x-rays was a recurring feature of transfer.
- Q I want to ask you about particular opiates. We have been talking about them in general terms, but I want to ask you about particular ones in certain circumstances. First of all, Oramorph. Was Oramorph a convenient and sensible opiate to provide, assuming of course the circumstances justified it, or was it something which caused problems?
- A It would be I think most people's first choice of strong opiate.
- D
- Q In terms of opiates which we have heard mention of in terms of patients in this case, opiates such as co-codamol and co-dydramol, sometimes the choice between those two might result in the choice being Oramorph. Are there preferences for administering Oramorph compared to ---
- A Co-dydramol and co-codamol are weaker opiates and I think one would look to prescribing them before prescribing Oramorph normally.
- E
- Q As you have already indicated to us, there may be circumstances where that is not appropriate.
- A Exactly.
- Q Oramorph again has the advantage of being flexible and of inducing a sense of euphoria to a certain extent.
- F
- A It can do.
- Q It is helpful in general terms in cases involving heart failure.
- A Yes.
- Q Anxiety and distress.
- A It is difficult at times, as I have said before, to determine whether someone's distress is physical or mental or a combination of both.
- G
- Q Then diamorphine. We need not trouble about the circumstances which justify that, because you have already given your evidence about it, but in terms of diamorphine being administered subcutaneously by means of a syringe driver, am I right in thinking that there was never any occasion in relation to any patients treated by Dr Barton where you felt the use of and the commencement of a syringe driver was inappropriate?
- H
- A I never, ever felt that.

- A
- Q Can we take it that if you had felt that, you would not have hesitated to say so?
A That is correct.
- Q Did you also find yourself in terms of dealing with relatives and the pressures of time so far as you were concerned that sometimes it was a struggle for you to find the time to speak to relatives when the need arose?
- B A It could be difficult at times. I do recollect coming down in the evenings to speak to relatives and coming I think on one or two occasions at a weekend when I was not on call.
- Q In terms of matters which might arise in terms of dealing with relatives, you have already indicated to us the problems that might arise if expectations had been raised too high, for whatever reason, but I think also it was your experience – I do not think it is something that is in dispute – that in fact the decline of patients on a continuing care ward might occur quite suddenly into what really was a terminal phase.
- C A Oh, yes. A patient can gradually decline or they can suddenly decline.
- Q No doubt if the decline was sudden, it would be something that would be, normally speaking, particularly shocking for relatives.
A Yes.
- D Q I think it is right – again this is taken from something you have said yourself either in interview or at the inquest; I think in interview – you yourself in 1999 were not aware of any guidelines or protocols for the use of opiates and sedatives.
A That is right.
- Q You have already told us that you were not aware of the analgesic ladder, although you would know what that would mean.
E A Yes.
- Q It does not mean to say your approach was not in general that, and you were not aware of the Wessex protocol.
A No.
- Q I think also you have indicated in the past that it was not unusual that there were no policies in place at Dryad with regard to the prescribing of strong opiate analgesic.
F A At that time I do not remember them being in place anywhere, and that applied to Southampton too, from where I had just come.
- Q Yes. Well, that flows on to the next thing I was going to ask you by way of clarification, which I think you have covered; there were not any at Queen Alexandra, for example, at that time. May I come, please, to the question of the range of dose. I appreciate the difficulties of trying to remember detail back to 1999, but it may be that you have actually clarified this in the last thing you said in answer to Mr Kark, but I am putting to you that you were aware in 1999 of Dr Barton prescribing diamorphine in the range 20-200.
G A No, I did not say that. I said I was aware of it being prescribed 20-80mg.
- Q Yes. Well, that is why I want to clarify this. I may have misunderstood you, but at the very end of the questions you were dealing with I thought you said, when you were asked
H

A about prescriptions in the range of 20-200, "I must have seen them and I should have done something about it".

A Indeed, I did say that.

Q So I just want to get it straight. You did see at the time prescriptions for diamorphine in the range of 20-200 or you did not?

B A I do not recollect seeing them. That is what I said. I did not recollect seeing these two prescriptions.

Q Because I have to put to you, Dr Reid, that you would have seen them on a number of occasions, and that you did not at any time query it with Dr Barton. That is what I am putting to you.

A I did not query it with Dr Barton. I think I would have seen both of these prescriptions once. I did see them once.

C Q I appreciate you did not have dealings with all the twelve patients we are dealing with in this hearing, but you did have dealings with a number of them, and I think with the exception of one of them they all had prescriptions which had a range of 20-200.

A That is correct.

D Q So are you saying, "I might well have seen them at the time. I just do not remember it", or, "I categorically would not have seen them", or what?

A Well, certainly the one we have not discussed, which was for 20-200 as an as required prescription, where it was written on the prescription sheet I would not normally have looked. The patient was not on a syringe driver at that time, and, while I accept that it is my responsibility to have looked, I would not have done that in practice.

E Q I think we had better, in fairness to you apart from anything else, just take an example of one of these drug charts, or prescription sheets, and just see what the position is. Might I have that? (To the Panel) There is a file containing a number of these and I may need to show the witness some. (Handed to the witness) I think, because some of them are now in pieces, they are not all folded together, if I could have the file for a moment I will show one example to you so we can establish what the picture would normally be. (Same handed) So the particular one I am asking the witness to look at, and I have not been through the entire file but I think it is one that is still intact, relates to Ruby Lake, Patient F. (To the witness)

F This is not a patient you dealt with. If I can just hold it up so that we can all see, this is the normal way in which these documents would be available to you when you did your ward round.

A Yes.

G Q The first sheet has a prescription sheet, safety of the patient and all that, at the front. The inside sheet has various matters relating to the patient and so on, and has a column on the left "As required prescription".

A Yes.

Q On the inside of the first sheet.

H THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry, Mr Langdale, may we at some point pass one of those around so that the Panel can be familiar with the layout?

A MR LANGDALE: What I am going to suggest is if I take the witness through it so he confirms this is what they normally look like, and then I can have that handed to the Panel and they can see. (To the witness) The second page, if you are reading it through in that way, having opened up the back fold, shows regular prescription drugs.

A Yes.

B Q In this particular case none of them opiates. There is then a further sheet that covers the same thing, in this case blank.

A Yes.

Q In this particular case, and it would normally be folded like *this*, back page in, cover sheet---

A No.

C Q Can we go on to that in a moment. If we just deal with the content of the sheet, the last sheet, if we open it all up, has "Daily review prescriptions", regular prescription details set out on the final page of this particular case, and in this particular case on that back sheet there is diamorphine 20-200, hyoscine 200-800, I think it is, midazolam 20-80.

A Yes.

D Q All by Dr Barton, with the times and dates and so on. Before we hand this to the Panel so they can see it, you were going to make a point, and you shook your head when I was showing the thing folded up. Explain.

A The drug chart was kept inside a blue plastic folder which opened out in three parts like *that*.

Q So can I just pause. It would be sitting in the folder like *this*, would it?

A No.

E Q All right. How would it be in the folder normally?

A The three parts of the blue plastic folder contained a piece of clear cellophane at the top and bottom, and the whole drug chart is slipped inside that.

Q If I can interrupt you, do you mean it was sitting inside the folder like *this*?

A When you opened up the blue plastic folder, that is---

F Q That is what you would see? You would see the three inside pages. Carry on.

A So unless a patient were on a syringe driver or a variable dose prescription I would not have lifted the prescription sheet out of the blue folder to see what was on the reverse.

Q How would you know there was nothing there, because it is a regular prescription on the rear sheet? It is not saying anything – it says "Daily review prescriptions"---

G A On the particular patient we are talking about, she did not receive the prescription which Dr Barton had written up.

Q Yes. Again, not your fault, I am trying to take it bit by bit. So you are saying, and I will come back to that, I am just pointing out the last sheet, the one which you would have to turn over and look at---

A Yes.

H

A Q It talks about daily review prescriptions.
A Yes.

Q What is the significance of that heading "Daily review prescriptions"?
A I think what it was designed with in mind was for using possibly with syringe drivers, with drugs like warfarin.

B Q Yes.
A So in other words where you might think of changing the dose on a daily basis.

Q I am going to pause there, and then the Panel can see it for themselves and I will ask you some more about what you were going to say. (Handed to the Panel)

C THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Langdale, while the Panel are looking at the document, if I have understood the evidence correctly, this blue folder in effect blocks out entirely a view of what is in effect the back of the form when it is opened out, so that the only thing that would be visible when it is in the blue folder would be those three inside pages, as it were.

MR LANGDALE: I am going to ask the witness about that in a moment, because he was about to say something and I cut him off, and I want to make that quite clear when we take on board the shape of the thing. A lot of the others, the pages have come apart and they are separate: (After a pause) (Handed to the witness) Dr Reid, you heard the Chairman's last point?

D A Yes.

Q And I was going to ask you: we picture it unfolded?
A Yes.

E Q In this, we will call it, the blue cover?
A Yes.

Q Supposing you wanted to look at what was written on the back sheet. What would you do when it is sitting in the blue cover?

A I would have to take it out of the blue cover.

F Q So the back of the blue cover is not transparent, so you cannot see what is on the back of the sheet?
A No.

Q If, however, the prescription for diamorphine – and I am focusing on that for obvious reasons – was written on one of the inside pages. I am holding up an example which you will look at later on dealing with the case of Enid Spurgin, our patient I?

G A Yes.

Q I think Mr Kark asked you about this. We shall come on to the photocopies in due course. You would see the range?

A Yes.

H Q And there is a range plainly, in her case – diamorphine 20-200?
A Yes.

A

Q You could not have missed that, could you?

A I could not have done, but I do not recollect seeing it.

Q Really we have to conclude you must have seen it. We should conclude, should we not, that you did not take it up with Dr Barton, although you had seen it?

B

A I have already acknowledged that I have no recollection of it. It is my responsibility to see that, to review prescription charts and where there was an entry like that to have taken it up with Dr Barton.

Q Because it would be a considerable concern for you as the consultant to check what the patient is on?

A Yes.

C

Q And to see what the prescribing history was?

A Yes.

Q In regard particularly to opiates of this kind?

A Indeed.

D

Q It obviously would have a significant effect upon your judgment and analysis of the situation?

A Yes.

Q We may have to come back to that just to illustrate the point with regard to the patients you yourself saw, but I am going to leave that for the moment, thank you. Perhaps you could fold that up, and then somebody can put that back in the proper little plastic folder for Ruby Lake. (So done) Thank you very much. I want to ask you, please, and it is still in the same context ---

E

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Langdale, I am sorry. The witness has been on the stand now for more than an hour, and I am getting indications from the Panel that they, at least, would appreciate a short break.

MR LANGDALE: Sir, of course.

F

THE CHAIRMAN: If that is a convenient moment, as you are about to move on – if there is ever a convenient moment.

MR LANGDALE: Of course. Just for the Panel's benefit, I am going to ask him about a couple of documents – they are not enormously long – but touching upon the same topic really, the same issue, and unless there are any other general questions I need to ask, I will be turning to the individual patients, which I will not be able to do within five or ten minutes. Those are going to take a bit of time. I imagine, depending on how long the Panel propose to sit this afternoon, that probably my questions may well run into tomorrow. I just say that to give you an indication.

G

THE CHAIRMAN: We normally sit until five o'clock as a general deadline. If we take a break now, then we are going to come back in in fifteen minutes or so and have not a great

H

A deal more time. It therefore may be, if everybody is happy, we continue with the questions on this section now and then, tomorrow morning, resume and deal with the patients.

MR LANGDALE: If that is convenient to the Panel, it may certainly be convenient to me and it may be convenient for the witness. I do not know.

B THE CHAIRMAN: Would that ---

THE WITNESS: Yes, that is fine.

THE CHAIRMAN: Good, thank you. Panel? (The Chairman conferred with the Panel) Yes, very well. That is what we will do, Mr Langdale.

C MR LANGDALE: Thank you very much. (To the witness) Dr Reid, some further documents – not a great number of them. I would like you to look, please, at this one. First of all, I will get the witness to identify it before the Panel have it. This is a document which, as you will see in a moment – I will make sure you have a copy – is a letter from Barbara Robinson, a lady whose name will be familiar to you, in October 1999 and it is headed “Learning Points from the Wilson complaint”. I am not asking you to read every word of it at the moment, but perhaps you would like to look at the last line but one where you see a Christian name. I would just like you to consider whether that would be referring, apparently, to you?

D A I suspect it was.

Q It looks like it, but I think we have to confirm that with you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Langdale, do you wish us to receive this as an exhibit?

E MR LANGDALE: I think I have gone as far as I need to. It is October 1999, when you are still engaged, obviously, in the Dryad Ward. Does this ring any bells with you?

A I had not seen it until perhaps a couple of months ago.

Q At the time do you remember seeing it? I am going to ask for the Panel to have it, and then I can ask the questions if I need to about it.

F THE CHAIRMAN: We will receive it as exhibit D4, please, ladies and gentlemen.

MR KARK: I am sorry to interrupt, but before this is handed out, I am a little troubled by this. The witness said he has never seen it, and he was not aware of it.

THE WITNESS: I saw it two months ago, just before the inquest.

G MR KARK: He might have seen it two months ago, but how is that going to assist the Panel in relation to his state of mind at the time of these events, which is what he is being asked about. There may be a way of introducing this legitimately by calling evidence about it, but I do not quite understand how this witness can help you about his state of mind at the relevant events by looking at the document which he has not seen till two months ago.

H MR LANGDALE: Sir, the writer of this letter will be called in due course. I think I must put it to the witness to see what he has to say about it. Apparently it refers to him even if he has

A not necessarily seen the letter itself, except shortly before the inquest. I am entitled to ask him about it. It is the only way the Panel are going to make sense of the questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, if the letter is coming in advance of the witness ---

MR KARK: I absolutely accept that. If the writer is being called, then I certainly accept it can be put in.

B THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

MR LANGDALE: I understand the nature of my friend's objection if we were not going to call the writer of the letter.

C THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for clarifying that. As I indicated, we will now receive that in evidence and marked it exhibit D4, please. (Document marked and circulated)

MR LANGDALE: Do you still have a copy in front of your?

A I have it here.

Q We appreciate, without my reading through every word of the letter, that it is not to you.

D A Yes.

Q Top right-hand corner: it is to somebody called Max Millett?

A Who was the Chief Executive.

Q The Chief Executive of the then Portsmouth Healthcare Trust?

A Portsmouth Healthcare Trust.

E Q And is he still the Chief Executive of whatever the new ---

A No.

Q He is not. But he was then? All right. And Barbara Robinson was a manager at the Trust, I think?

A Yes, she is a manager in Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

F Q Dated 27 October 1999, top right. "Learning Points from the Wilson Complaint". She is thanking Mr Millett for his memo and a copy of Dr Turner's letter. The first section is "Microfilming" and I am not going to trouble you with that. The next, 2b), is "Nursing Care Plans":

"This has been picked up as part of the Clinical Governance Action Plan..."

G And 3d) "Good Practice in writing up medication." That is the bit I want to focus on with you if I may.

"It is an agreed protocol that Jane Barton, Clinical Assessment, writes up diamorphine for a syringe driver with doses ranging between 20 and 200 mgs a day. The nurses are trained to gradually increase the dose until the optimum level has been reached for the patient's pain relief. If the prescription is not

H

A written up in this way the patient may have to wait in pain while a doctor is called out who may not even know the patient.

Ian may wish to raise this at the Medicine and Prescribing Committee.

I hope this cover all the points

B Barbara"

I think it may follow from what you have said, you never actually saw this letter at the time?

A I have never seen the letter.

Q Except for it was drawn to your attention before the inquest?

A Yes.

C

Q But the suggestion that you, Ian, may wish to raise this at the Medicine and Prescribe Committee. What happened there?

A I have no recollection of this now. I am not aware of any protocol which existed which allowed Dr Barton to write up diamorphine for a syringe driver with doses ranging between 20 and 200 mg a day. I am not aware of any such protocol.

D Q This is something you did not know anything about at the time? Yes?

A Correct.

Q Nobody had said to you, "This apparently is a protocol and you may wish to raise it." Nobody asked you to do that?

A Not to the best of my recollection.

E Q In the ordinary course of events, would Mr Millett, having received a message like this or a letter like this from Barbara Robinson, would you have expected him to pass it on to you or raise it with you?

A I would have expected him to.

Q All right, but you have no recollection ---

A Absolutely not .

F

Q Indeed, you are saying, "So far as I am concerned, that did not happen"?

A As far as I am concerned there was not an existing agreed protocol .

Q That I fully understand. I just want to make absolutely clear, in fairness to you, are you saying Max Millett never mentioned to you anything about ---

A I have no recollection of this at all.

G

Q All right. That is as far as I can take it with you. Do you want to add something - sorry?

A No.

Q Then there is another document which I would like you to look at, which is headed "Protocol for Prescription and Administration of Diamorphine by Subcutaneous Infusion".

H

A Take a look at it, see if it rings a bell and then I will see if you can assist us with that. (Same handed) Dr Reid, looking at that, does it ring any bells with you?

A Yes.

Q Down in the bottom left, it looks as though it is a document emanating from you.

A Yes, I was the author.

B Q In that case, I think the Panel can have the document.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, are you content for us to receive it?

MR KARK: I have just been given it. At this stage I have no objection to it going in, on the basis that it is a document about which the witness can give evidence. Can I ask if this is being produced by a witness in due course, somebody who is going to speak about it?

C MR LANGDALE: This witness is going to speak about it, because it is his document.

MR KARK: I am sorry. I did not hear the witness say that.

THE WITNESS: Yes, I am the author of this document.

D MR KARK: I beg your pardon. I did not hear. I accept that entirely.

MR LANGDALE: Then perhaps it can be handed to the Panel. (Same handed to the Panel)

THE CHAIRMAN: We will mark it D5, Mr Langdale.

E MR LANGDALE: If you just take a moment to look through it, Dr Reid, it may be you are familiar with it. (Pause for reading) Dr Reid, I need to take you through most of this quite rapidly, I hope, and the Panel will be able to follow it as we go through it. Looking in the bottom left-hand corner, it is your reference, as it were, and it looks like the date is 3 December 1999.

A That is correct.

F Q Would you just help us, please? How did this come about? Was this something you were asked to do or is it something you produced yourself by way of a protocol?

A I think where this originated from was the Wilson complaint, where we had had an independent consultant come in to review that complaint. As part of reviewing that complaint, she wrote to the chief executive, expressing concern about the range of diamorphine that had been administered or had been prescribed for a particular patient. It was as a result of that – I think principally that – that I felt we needed to have clear policies and procedures in place for the prescribing of diamorphine.

G Q Thank you very much. That gives us the context. May I make it clear, the Wilson the witness is referring to is not the Wilson we are concerned with as Patient H? Can we just look at what it says:

H

A

“INTRODUCTION

In community hospitals, particularly at weekends and bank holidays, medical cover is provided on an emergency call out basis.

B

This can lead to a situation whereby patients who are experiencing increasing pain may not be able to have their pain control needs immediately met. To overcome this and also to give guidance to nurses who may be unsure as to who much analgesia (diamorphine) to administer within a variable dose prescription.

So we can see what you are talking about. Then:

“DOSAGE

C

Guidance from the palliative care services indicates that if pain has not been controlled in the previous 24 hours by ‘Xmg’ of diamorphine, then up to double the dose should be administered the following day i.e. up to 2 x ‘Xmg’ should be given.”

You have dealt with that already.

D

“PAIN CONTROL CHART

It is suggested that a pain control chart (see appendix) should be completed on a four hourly basis for all patients receiving a diamorphine infusion.

PRESCRIPTION

E

Diamorphine may be written up as a variable dose to allow doubling on up to two successive days, e.g. 10-40 mg, 60-240 mg or similar. The reason for prescribing should be recorded in the medical notes.

ADMINISTRATION

F

If pain has been adequately controlled within the previous 24 hours, the nurse should administer a similar dose of diamorphine over the next 24 hours.

If the previous 24 hour dose has made the patient unduly drowsy etc, the nurse should use his/her discretion as to whether the dose to be administered for the next 24 hours can/should be reduced, within the prescribed dosage regime. If the minimum dose appears to have made the patient too drowsy, the on-call doctor should be contacted.

G

If the patient’s pain has not been controlled, the nurse should use his/her discretion as to the dose to be given within the next 24 hours, i.e. he or she may administer up to double the previous 24 hours dose.

INFORMATION TO PATIENTS and RELATIVES

H

Where patients are mentally capable of receiving such information, they must be told that an infusion of a painkiller (diamorphine) is being started and that the dose will be

A adjusted if necessary to allow them to be as comfortable as possible without being unduly sedated.

When patients are unable to understand such information, by reason of either their physical or mental status, the decision that diamorphine is being, or about to be, administered should be communicated to their next-of-kin/relatives, again indicating that the aim is to make the patient as comfortable as possible and that the dose will be adjusted to keep the patient as comfortable as possible without being unduly sedated. If relatives express concern about the administration of diamorphine, despite the above discussion, the medical staff should be informed and the medical staff should make every effort to discuss the administration of diamorphine with the patient's next-of-kin/family. A resume of the discussion should be recorded in the patient's notes."

B

C We can just take a moment to look at the Infusion and Pain Control Chart, which is attached to your document. That was, as it were, compiled by you as an illustration.

A Yes.

Q The next page is the Diamorphine Infusion and Pain Control Chart. So this was something which you were seeking to institute.

A Yes.

D

Q May I just ask you this, because it is obvious you stand by the content of that, because you have explained it in your own evidence. Was that something which actually did come into place? Do you remember?

A No, not in that form.

E MR LANGDALE: That may not matter. Sir, that is all I need to ask about those documents and if that would be a convenient moment for us to break, then may we do so?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Thank you very much indeed, Mr Langdale. Doctor, we are going to break now and we will be returning at 9.30 tomorrow morning. Is that convenient to you?

A That is very convenient, thank you.

F THE CHAIRMAN: Very well. I remind you that you remain on oath. Please do not discuss this case with anybody in the intervening period, nor allow anybody to address you on the subject. Thank you very much indeed. 9.30, ladies and gentlemen.

(The Panel adjourned until 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 1 July 2009)

G

H

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL

FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL (SERIOUS PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT)

Wednesday 1 July 2009

Code A

Chairman: Mr Andrew Reid, LLB JP

Panel Members: Ms Joy Julien
Mrs Pamela Mansell
Mr William Payne
Dr Roger Smith

Legal Assessor: Mr Francis Chamberlain

CASE OF:

BARTON, Jane Ann

(DAY SEVENTEEN)

MR TOM KARK of counsel and MR BEN FITZGERALD of counsel, instructed by Field Fisher Waterhouse, Solicitors, appeared on behalf of the General Medical Council.

MR TIMOTHY LANGDALE QC and MR ALAN JENKINS of counsel, instructed by the Medical Defence Union, appeared on behalf of Dr Barton, who was present.

(Transcript of the shorthand notes of **Code A** & Co Ltd.
Tel No: **Code A**)

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A THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning everybody. Good morning, doctor, welcome back. Please take a seat. I remind you, of course, that you remain on oath and we broke yesterday when Mr Langdale was about to turn to the matter of individual patients.

MR LANGDALE: That is correct.

B RICHARD REID, Recalled
Cross-examined by MR LANGDALE, Continued

Q Dr Reid, I am not going to trouble you with any matters relating to Patient E, Gladys Richards, whom you spoke about – the one contact you had with her. There is nothing I need to ask you by way of fleshing out what you said, so I am going to turn right away, if I may, to the position with regard to Patient I, Enid Spurgin. I just want to deal first of all, please, with the sequence of events. I do not know whether you have at the beginning of that file a chronology?

A Yes.

Q I do not know whether you have the up to date one, the full one. Does your start with an entry on the 19 March?

A Yes.

D Q Then various bits in italic print?

A Yes.

Q Then I am sure we are looking at the same document. Wherever possible I am going to try to use this for assisting us getting through this quicker than we might otherwise do. Would you look, please, in that file at page 374, using those numbers that have a little dash either side. We can see there the notes you made on page 374.

E A Sorry, is this in the ---

Q Yes, sorry. I will indicate when we are going to the chronology. We need to actually look at the document itself.

A Yes, thank you.

F Q You have already covered this.

“A delightful 92 year old lady... She is still in a lot of pain which is the main barrier to mobilisation at present – could her analgesia be reviewed?”

A Yes.

G Q Can we take that as being that you thought she perhaps needed to receive more analgesia than she was currently receiving?

A Yes.

Q Would you then look, please, at page 301, bearing in mind the date of your seeing her in hospital was 23 March.

A Yes.

H

A Q You are writing there to Surgeon Command Scott later on in the month, on the 26th – all right?

A Yes.

Q And you say in the first section of your letter that you had visited Mrs Spurgin at Haslar on 24 March. Now, maybe it is a mistake on the date, but it is one visit only that we are talking about?

B A Yes.

Q So really it appears to be a typo in the letter, the 23 March. Your note says the 23rd?

A Oh, yes. I beg your pardon.

Q You see what I mean?

A I beg your pardon, yes. I understand what you mean.

C

Q I just want to be clear that it is not two visits. It is you seeing her once?

A That is correct.

Q It looks as if it is sensible to go on the date as being the 23rd? All right?

A Yes.

D Q Could we go to the chronology that is at the front, if you would, and go to page 6. We can see the date, 23 March, is there but what is recorded in the history column, as it were, is from nursing notes and therefore not from your review. If we move on to page 8 in that same chronology, if you would, at the top, which appears to be in the section involving 24 March, we have the little note in summary form that I have just drawn your attention to. What we have to bear in mind – Sir, I am sure this can be corrected on a different version of this document – but we need to bear in mind that the chronology appears to be inaccurate. It should be the 23rd that you are seeing. It is not your fault, Dr Reid, of course, so we can get it in context. We can just note, looking at the chronology, if you go back to the 23rd, page to page 6 of the chronology which is 23 March, to save you looking through all the documents to check these things we are assuming it is correct, on page 6 we can see that on the 23rd, half way down the page, she receives paracetamol.

E

A Yes.

F Q The same amount that she had been on before. It does not look as if the hospital acted on your suggestion?

A Yes.

Q It appears, if you go over the page to page 8 again, that on the 24th she is still on 1 g paracetamol. They have not done anything about it and, over the page at page 9, again the same amount?

G A Yes.

Q Is that perhaps an illustration of the kind of thing I was asking you about yesterday, about hospitals in this situation perhaps tolerating greater pain levels than you would in a continuing care ward?

A Yes, and certainly if one were wanting to attempt rehabilitation, it would be vitally important to get pain under control.

H

- A Q You indicated that where your letter is at page 301, if you go back to that which we looked at a moment or two ago, you talk about mobilisation not only in that document but elsewhere, but as I think you indicated to us in your evidence when you said “hopefully remobilisation” at the end, it would depend entirely on Haslar having checked out her post-operative condition to make sure she was suitable for transfer?
A Yes.
- B Q And you were indicating, although you did not spell it out in black and white, because one tries to look on things in the best light in reality that meant you had considerable doubts that she would get back on her feet?
A Yes. I had some doubts about whether... Yes.
- C Q I think the description you gave in the statement you made was “... meant I had considerable doubts”?
A Yes. That is correct.
- Q What there is between the two may be debatable, but that is an expression you used in the statement to the police and obviously the concerns, you say, that the hip was very painful? Yes?
A Yes.
- D Q Can we go, please, to page 23 in so far as this patient is concerned?
A Is that the summary document or ---
Q I am sorry. It is my fault. The main file itself, page 23 – the document you looked at in the course of your evidence in chief. This is from the nurse, Captain Code A I think it is?
A Yes.
- E Q This is the transfer letter. You have already indicated to us that that was quite at variance with what you had found a couple of days before?
A Yes.
- Q And you indicated that you would be very surprised if that lady could be properly described as “weight-bearing” unless she had, I think you said, great assistance?
A Yes.
- F Q That means – what – nurses supporting her?
A Yes. It would probably mean two nurses to support.
- Q And a zimmer frame?
A A zimmer frame, possibly, yes.
- G Q Thank you. If you look back to the summary at the beginning of the file, I just want to use that as the quickest of dealing with the drug administration history. Perhaps you would turn up in the chronology document or history document, page 9, where we have the date of the transfer to Dryad. Do you see that?
A Yes.
- H Q Then over the page, the transfer having set out the position, you have Dr Barton’s review. We have already looked at that. There she says, “Plan sort out analgesia.”

- A A Yes.
- Q Obviously a sensible thing to do with the patient in this condition?
A Indeed.
- Q The chronology goes on. If you look at page 11, there is a prescription for Oramorph by Dr Barton, and we can see the stages at which it was administered. I need not trouble you with the detail of that. Perfectly sensible course to take. Agreed?
B A Yes.
- Q Any time I ask you about a situation like this, when you were not the person who is actually dealing with the patient at the time, we have to bear in mind the most significant thing is the view of the person who actually is examining the patient, who has the patient there in front of them?
C A Yes.
- Q Over the page to page 12, we can see that Oramorph is administered, together with co-dydramol – all right? In the top left section – Oramorph?
A Yes.
- Q The particular drugs are given little bullet point or a bullet spot, as it were. The 28th, the next day, Oramorph and co-dydramol – all right?
D A Yes.
- Q Then over the page to page 13, in terms of analgesia, we are looking at the 29th, co-dydramol. She is not receiving Oramorph at that point. All right – on 29 March?
A Yes, yes.
- Q Over the page, page 14, co-dydramol, and then by the 31st, at the bottom of that section, Oramorph is administered again, and then there is co-dydramol and then MST. All right?
E A Yes.
- Q She is still in pain, as we can see on page 15 at the top. In a lot of pain. Again, nothing that you would criticise in terms of the opiates that were being administered at that stage?
F A No.
- Q But may I just ask you this in the light of something we heard from the witness? We have here a patient who has been treated on Dryad with co-dydramol, but also opiates in the sense of Oramorph and MST. All right?
A Yes.
- Q Can I put it as bluntly as this? It would be complete nonsense to suggest that patients when they arrived at Dryad were immediately put on a syringe driver?
G A As far as I am concerned that is complete nonsense.
- Q We heard that said by a witness, and I would just like you to deal with that. On 1 April, looking at page 15, MST. Taking it pretty rapidly, page 16, MST on the 2nd, and the 3rd and on the 4th. All right?
H

A A Yes.
 Q Then we come to the 6 April, when she is reviewed by Dr Barton – all right?
 A Yes.

Q Then over the page, page 18, on the 6th, MST – all right?
 A Yes.

B Q Then antibiotics are mentioned on the 7th, and we have the history of pain. The 7th, 8th and 9th on page 19, MST?
 A Yes.

Q Your note, which we can see mentioned on page 18, which you dealt with in your evidence – your note of seeing her on 7 April?
 C A Yes.

Q Asking for an x-ray to be taken?
 A Yes.

Q As you said, there was clearly a continuing problem with the right hip. All right?
 D A Yes.

Q And you, of course, would be aware of the drug history up until that point. All right?
 A Yes.

Q You had indicated that an x-ray should be taken. Would you look, please, at page 134 in the main body of the file?
 E A Yes.

Q If you look about half way down that page, dated 7 April, where it says, “[Seen by] Dr Reid. For x-ray tomorrow at 1500 hours.” It looks as though an x-ray had been arranged?
 A It does.

Q I am going to go on the basis that an x-ray in fact, for whatever reason, was not taken. All right?
 F A Yes.

Q I can only put this to you as a possible situation. The following day, if an x-ray had been arranged for the 8th, if the patient was unable to be moved safely or properly in terms of their care for x-ray, would it be proper to make a decision not to take an x-ray?
 A I think that would depend on the whole situation at the time.

G Q Yes, but there might have been circumstances where, in the view of the nursing staff. The patient was not well enough to be moved to x-ray, or is that something we can rule out?
 A I think that would be very unusual.

H Q Thank you. Then can we look, please, at the drug chart at page 178 in that same main body of the file. Again, you have been asked about that and I am not going to go over that with you. We can see the various drugs that are set out, including morphine, MST and so on,

A and obviously in terms of seeing this patient on 7 April, you would have indicated if you had any concern at all about the drug administration up to that point. Right?

A Yes.

Q Then your next note is when you saw her on 12 April. That is on page 27, if we can turn to that, please. On 12 April:

B "Now v. drowsy ...
Diamorphine infusion established"

So when you saw her she was on the syringe driver. Correct?

A Yes.

C Q Which had been commenced that day, and you took the decision, because she appeared to be very drowsy, that the appropriate thing to do was to reduce the diamorphine down to 40?

A Yes.

Q And you obviously had in mind the fact that it was a real possibility, if not a likelihood indeed, that pain would recur?

A Yes.

D Q And that therefore if that did happen, the nursing staff should increase the dose to 60?

A Yes.

Q No doubt if it had continued, they would be justified in increasing it further?

A Yes.

E Q It is clear that the midazolam that the patient was also on, administered subcutaneously, was in fact increased, albeit not by an enormous amount, but it went up. I am not suggesting for a moment, Dr Reid, that that was something that you asked to be done. Indeed, Dr Barton was not present when you saw this patient that day. She had been in the hospital in the morning, but this patient was seen by you in the afternoon. It appears that a nurse – and the initials, I think, are Lynne Barrett's initials – it looks as if the nurse got it wrong?

F A I did not know.

Q You did not ask for it to be done, and the dose in fact, midazolam, was put as the same as the diamorphine?

A Yes.

G Q Which involved an increase. Can we just look, please, at page 174 in the same file. It is clear, obviously, that this is something you would have seen?

A Yes.

Q Indeed, it would be important for you to take note of it in terms of your examination of the patient, and your decision as to what was appropriate?

A Yes.

H

A Q And it obviously is plain as a pikestaff that the diamorphine had been prescribed at the dose range 20-200?

A Yes.

Q That would have registered with you, would it not?

A I think that what... I just cannot remember. What it certainly registered with me is the patient was receiving 80 mg, which I felt was too much.

B

Q I fully appreciate that. We can see at 1640 in the section dealing with drug administration, that is when the dose was reduced.

A Yes.

Q Because LB, who I think is Lynne Barrett, is the nurse doing that. Perhaps we can just take note of the point I made about midazolam. Lower down the page, midazolam was 20 and it was increased to 40, matching the dose which you prescribed for the diamorphine.

C

A Yes.

Q For whatever reason. You have told us about your approach as to how you would have established in terms of what she had been on, in terms of MST and how you would, as it were, take into account the amount that she had been on prior to the administration of diamorphine.

D

A Yes.

Q Which in fact was 45 in 24 hours. To make a direct comparison, a direct conversion with diamorphine, you would halve it, bringing you out at about 20 to 25, you have said, subcutaneously.

A Yes.

E

Q But because the patient's pain control needed to be greater, you therefore thought an appropriate initial dose in terms of the situation as you found it was 40. That is the process you adopted in working out the figure.

A Yes.

Q You have told the Panel that your reduction would have an effect on the patient, in other words, the reduction would come into play within about an hour.

F

A I emphasise that I am not an expert in pharmacology, but that is my understanding.

Q Obviously on that occasion, you did not ask what had happened with regard to the x-ray.

A No, I did not.

G

Q I am not criticising you for a moment, but just so we know. You did not say, "Why has this patient not had an x-ray?" Why not say on this occasion, "She should be given an x-ray, as I asked"? I am sorry if the answer is obvious, but would you like to deal with it? Why not say, "I did ask for an x-ray earlier. It does not appear to have been done. I think she should be x-rayed."

A I suspect that I felt at this stage this lady was terminally ill.

H

- A Q I would just like to ask you about that in general terms. Somebody in that state, why not refer them back to the Queen Alexandra? Again, the answer may be obvious, but I would like to hear you explain.
A Because I think this lady's prognosis was awful in terms of recovery at all and certainly functional recovery. I thought this lady's prognosis was awful, both in terms of her life and most certainly in terms of her ability to get back on her feet.
- B Q That leads me on to ask you something in more general terms now that we have discussed the condition of this patient. Where a patient on a continuing care ward is in such pain and distress that the administration of subcutaneous analgesia is justified and that subcutaneous analgesia involves a combination of diamorphine and midazolam, which is quite a common combination. Correct?
A Yes.
- C Q Those drugs are administered to deal with pain, distress, agitation – whatever one describes the symptoms as.
A That is correct.
Q The patient is on the palliative care route. We have seen that.
A Yes.
- D Q It may be very difficult to draw the line between palliative care and terminal care.
A This lady was terminally ill and needed palliation of her symptoms.
Q It is very difficult to say at precisely what time one is talking about terminal care, but people use different expressions. The patient continues to deteriorate. Let us assume that. Is it right for us to have this in mind? The patient's deterioration may be due simply to the patient's symptoms which brought about the pain, distress and agitation in the first place, their medical condition, to use that expression.
A It may be because someone was dying, rather than ...
Q Their condition is just getting worse.
A Yes.
- F Q It may be the deterioration is due in part to the effect of the subcutaneous analgesia.
A Yes.
Q That is something you have to live with in deciding what the best thing to do is.
A There sometimes is a balance to be struck between the dose and symptom control.
- G Q When the doctor treating the patient is faced with a situation of a patient continuing to deteriorate and the continued deterioration justifies an increase in the diamorphine and the midazolam, the doctor is aware that the administration of those drugs may well be playing a part in the deterioration.
A It certainly – yes.
- H Q But a doctor cannot decide precisely what is causing the deterioration: whether it is the patient's medical condition or that in combination with the analgesia without taking the patient off the analgesia and see what happens.
A That is correct.

A

Q Is that something you would seriously contemplate?

A Not in this situation. No, I would not normally contemplate doing that.

Q Again, I am sorry if the answer is obvious, but why not? Why not just say, "Well, I'm not sure whether the patient's condition is deteriorating entirely because of the medical condition or in part because of the administration of diamorphine and midazolam" Why not just take them off?

B

A I think what one has to look at is someone's prognosis. In other words, what is this patient's expectation of life, what sort of symptoms have they been experiencing up to date and to make a judgment about what is the most important issue to resolve. In other words, is someone at the end of their life and the overriding priority is to keep them comfortable or might they, by reversing the effects of opiates or whatever enable them to return to a more normal state?

C

Q What is the risk if you take somebody off a syringe driver?

A Worsening of the pain and agitation and distress.

Q Just in relation to this patient, before we leave the situation, you have told us what you recorded – we have seen it on page 27 – you have told us what your view was of the situation. I just want to check one thing with you, if I may. If you look at page 20 of the chronology? This is not an occasion when you saw the patient, but on 10 April, before you are seeing her on the 12th, on the night of the 10th, if that is right, she is described as having had a very poor night. Do you see that?

D

A Yes.

Q And:

E

"Appears to be leaning to left. Does not appear to be as well and experiencing difficulty in swallowing."

I am not going to read out the rest. She is not drinking, despite encouragement and help. She is on Oramorph at that time. That may well be an indication of some sort of cerebrovascular event.

A It could be.

F

Q Again, this is not a criticism of you. Are you able to remember whether you were aware of that when you did your ward round on the 12th and reviewed her?

A I really could not say.

Q If you had been aware of it, would that have been a further factor influencing your view as to what was appropriate in the circumstances?

G

A Yes.

Q You were asked questions about the cause of death. That is why I am making that point.

A I understand.

H

Q That is all I need to ask you about that patient. We can move on, please, to Patient J. We have the general picture set out in the chronology at the beginning of the file. It is a

A chronology which is going to be updated; it is not as full as the other one which you were looking at, but it may be we can use that one to move on pretty quickly, because looking at the chronology on the first page, we can see that he was admitted to A&E on the first page on 6 August at QAH. If you turn over the page, if we look at 9 August, that is when you reviewed this patient. We have already looked at your notes. You remember this is the very large gentleman.

A Yes.

B Q I am not going to ask you to look back at the notes, but just so we can see the history. There is a continuing history on QAH, "Reviewed on ward" and so on and so forth. On 13 August on page 3 of the chronology we see the planned transfer to Dryad. On the 15th, it is noted there is no bed available.

A Yes.

C Q Another indication of the sort of pressure on Dryad. Correct?

A Yes.

Q On the 16th, there is no bed available. Dr Tandy, from whom we will be hearing, saw him. Then if you look on page 4, on 23 August he was actually admitted on that date and you have covered that with us.

A Yes.

D Q Looking on the chronology and moving over to page 5, he has been admitted on the 23rd, some medication, including paracetamol, is prescribed by a doctor other than Dr Barton.

A Yes. I think that was Dr Ravindrane.

Q A blood sample was sent for analysis on the 24th.

A Yes.

E Q Dr Barton is prescribing temazepam on that day.

A Yes.

Q Then we see on 25 August a verbal message from Dr Beasley. That is a doctor whose name you will recognise in Dr Barton's practice.

A Yes.

F Q To withhold the clexane dose and review with Dr Barton *mane*. In other words, the following day.

A Yes.

Q Would you just help us, please, with clexane? As I understand it, that is an anti-coagulant.

G A That is right.

Q If a patient is bleeding – and we had better look at the notes just to see the sort of thing that was operating in this case. If you go to page 63, do you see the date of 25 August?

A Yes.

H Q On that date, it is recorded in the summary that he is passing fresh blood PR – per rectum?

- A A Yes.
- Q Then:
- “? Clexane. Verbal message from Dr Beasley to withhold 1800 dose and review with Dr Barton mane. Also vomiting – metoclopramide 10 mg given IM ... good effect.
- B Would you just help us, please, with the significance of that? If the patient is passing fresh blood and it appears that Dr Beasley had received that information over the telephone, does that make sense?
- A Yes.
- Q The reason, if you could just explain.
- A Because clexane is an anti-coagulant and, if not the cause of the bleeding, would certainly make bleeding worse.
- C Q Then the administration in terms of vomiting of the other drug.
- A Yes. Metoclopramide is an anti-emetic, in other words, an anti-nausea, anti-vomiting medication.
- D Q So that, so far as you can judge it looking the notes, makes sense too?
- A Yes.
- Q Then if we could look, please, at page 174, looking at the top part of that page, we can see the two medications you have just been dealing with, or certainly one of them, the metoclopramide. We can see it is verbal, Dr Beasley, in the top left.
- A Yes.
- E Q Does there appear to be Dr Beasley’s signature lower down that page?
- A I think it is overwritten. I think that is Dr Beasley’s signature.
- Q What I am suggesting to you – again, you cannot possibly say, but just so we can have this picture in mind as we consider your seeing of this patient – it looks as if Dr Beasley probably came in in the evening. He must have been there to sign on the 25th. That would be consistent with him coming in, would it not?
- F A He has signed it at some stage, presumably after 1755.
- Q Given the verbal authorisation. It is consistent with him having actually come in perhaps later on that evening.
- A Yes. It is consistent with him having visited the hospital and signed the drug chart.
- G Q Just while we are on that page, because we are going to come to your seeing him on 1 November, we can see there diamorphine. I am sorry. That is in September so I need not trouble you with that. We will come back in terms of November later, the range that is there. Then would you look, please, at page 56? We can take up the picture in terms of Dr Barton, page 56 at the top of the page, 26 August is when she calls to see him. All right?
- A Yes.
- H Q We have already dealt with this, “clammy unwell”, and you have explained

A the significance of that, "suggest MI treat stat [diamorphine]". In other words, an instant dose of diamorphine, a single dose. Is that right?

A Yes.

Q "Oramorph overnight". Perfectly sensible so far as you can judge it ...

A Yes.

B Q ... in the circumstances. "Alternative possibly GI bleed but no ..."?

A Haematemesis.

Q The significance of haematemesis, please?

A Haematemesis means vomiting blood.

Q

C

"Not well enough to transfer to acute unit

Keep comfortable

I am happy for nursing staff to confirm death"

We bear in mind, on the preceding page of that file, that Dr Ravindrane had admitted this patient on the 23rd. All right?

D

A Yes.

Q We have the date. Dr Ravindrane, can we assume, should have seen the previous notes coming from the hospital?

A Should have seen? If ---

E

Q I appreciate you cannot say with confidence, but in the ordinary courses of events should have done. If we look back to the previous page, page 54, that is the hospital note by - I think it may be Dr Code A?

A Yes.

Q On 20 August, he has put towards the end of his note, "Not for 555".

A Yes.

F

Q Meaning?

A Not for cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Q So in the ordinary course of events, if Dr Ravindrane had seen that, no doubt that would have a bearing on whether he made any decision that this patient should be referred back to the hospital?

A Yes.

G

Q I appreciate the difficulty, Dr Reid, in you trying to deal with this when you had not actually seen the patient yourself, but we are trying to piece the picture together. We can see the situation, back on page 56, after what Dr Barton had indicated, but, in her view, he was not well enough to transfer to an acute unit. He remained poorly, as the note made by her on the 28th. I need not trouble you with the next note. You, of course, then see him on 1 August. All right?

A 1 September.

H

- A Q I am sorry. I keep making the mistake - 1 September. It follows that you would have seen the previous history as recorded on that document?
A Yes.
- Q Would have seen that Dr Barton had been raising the possibility of GI bleed. All right?
A Yes.
- B Q If we go to page 174, the drug chart, when you saw him on 1 September it would have been apparent that he was on the syringe driver?
A Yes.
- Q Again, it is the same point really, Dr Reid, but I draw your attention to it: you would have seen that the diamorphine prescribed was the range 40-200?
A I can see that from the chart.
- C Q Because this is not an example of the rear part which you were dealing with yesterday, you would have been looking at the prescription position, because he is on the syringe driver; you would need to know, would you not?
A Yes. As I have said before, I cannot recollect, I have never seen this prescription, but, nevertheless, it was my responsibility to see it.
- D Q All right. I will not press you any further on that. I do not think I can get any further information on that. The view taken as to what was appropriate with regard to the treatment for this patient, back to page 56, would also depend on what you would have made of any results that had come through with regard to this patient. For example, the haemoglobin would have been available to you?
A I cannot say whether it would have been or not.
- E Q In the normal course of events it would have been?
A Yes.
- Q We know that it had dropped so it would be an indication of the patient having bled quite significantly?
A Yes.
- F Q Once again, you did not query because you did not see anything wrong or incorrect about this patient being on the syringe driver by that stage?
A No, I felt this man was terminally ill and because of that I may not have looked or asked for haemoglobin results.
- G Q I think you have already indicated a number of factors that applied anyway with regard to this patient. Extremely unlikely to leave hospital terminally ill, as you have already indicated.
- Q As you saw the history, and whatever other material was supplied to you, there was nothing which caused you to feel that Dr Barton had acted inappropriately?
A No.
- H Q May I turn, please, then to Patient K, Elsie Devine. I think the first document to go to, please, in the file is at page 155. Do you have that?

A A Yes, I have.

Q Thank you. At the top of the page we can see, "[admitted to] Dryad", on 21 October. I am not going to read through all of that, but the plan:

"Get to know
Assess rehab potential",

B - and so on -

"Probably for rest home in due course".

Then four days later you saw this patient, because that is the note you have already dealt with. Yes?

C A Yes.

Q As you have recorded about halfway through your note, "chronic renal failure"?

A Yes.

Q I want to ask you some questions relating to a view you have already expressed about the situation with regard to this patient and I am referring, Dr Reid, to evidence that you gave at the inquest. You may remember you were asked about this patient?

D A Yes.

Q We have the transcript. I just want to ask you about one or two matters arising from your evidence at the inquest. I think you indicated that although, of course, you are not a renal physician, you are not a nephrologist, you indicated that it was nonetheless clear to you that there is a long list of possibilities which could account for deterioration in renal function?

E A Yes.

Q We do not need to go through all of them, but that was the position. As you have already indicated, in terms of urinary tract infection that was an extremely common cause of deterioration in renal function ---

F A In elderly people, yes.

Q You have already covered that topic in the evidence you gave. The time that I think you saw her the position was, with regard to 25 October, if I can just deal with that. You were asked about why you had not referred this patient when you saw her on 25 October, why you had not referred her to a renal consultant, and you gave your reasons why. Do you remember?

G A Yes.

Q Again, I am going to take it shortly. You indicated that you felt from reading the notes, not from any personal recollection at the time, Mrs Devine was likely to have what is called a vascular dementia?

A Yes.

H Q A series of small little strokes and so on. Yes?

- A A Yes.
- Q In addition she had chronic renal failure. She had a very low albumen level in her blood?
- A Yes.
- B Q Which you indicated was an extremely poor prognostic marker?
- A Yes.
- Q Would you just explain that, please, why it makes the prognosis poorer?
- A Albumen is a protein in blood and what we know is that in people with chronic illnesses the lower your albumen in general the worse your prognosis.
- C Q Your feeling was at that stage that because of the multiple problems and having excluded other physical causes, like urinary tract infection, it was unlikely that anything more could be done from a renal perspective than had been done already?
- A That is correct.
- Q You made it clear again at that stage you are not a renal physician?
- A That is correct.
- D Q You made the general point:
- “It is not appropriate ... to refer everyone on to a specialist. One has to make judgments about what [a person’s] prognosis is ...”
- A Yes.
- E Q In this case you felt that her prognosis was extremely poor and that was the reason why you thought it was not appropriate to refer this patient on to a nephrologist.
- A That is correct.
- F Q I do not think I need to ask you any more detail because you were asked a number of questions about that at the inquest. For my learned friend’s reference point, that is day eleven, the inquest, page 33. There is another reference at day eleven, page 10.
- Would you look, please, at page 156, the next page on, because, Dr Reid, there is just something about your further note I want to clarify with you. At the top of the page, we are now on 1 November, “Physically independent”, and so on, you set out the position, you have already told us about it, and then the last two lines:
- G “[Therefore] try home visit to see if functions better in own home.”
- What was the situation then? If you had indicated in your view on 25 October there were a number of problems which made the prognosis very poor, would you help us with what the realities were when you were saying, “[Therefore] try home visit”?
- H A I cannot remember without going through the notes at what stage I would

A have made the judgment about Mrs Devine's prognosis being so poor. I am not sure it was at that stage on the 25th. I think it was later but I would have to look through the file.

Q Yes. I think that was the context you were being asked in the inquest about the 25th. I will just double-check there but I am pretty sure that is right. (Pause) I think it was 25 October you were being asked about, because you were being asked about your note with regard to chronic renal failure, because you have already been asked by another advocate at the inquest whether you could have referred her to a consultant.

A Yes.

Q The coroner said:

C "In this case you didn't refer her on to a renal consultant. Why not?"

- and you gave those answers.

In that context, maybe you were meaning at a later stage?

A I think I may have been.

D Q At the time, on 1 November, it seemed a possibility that it might be worth trying a home visit?

A Yes.

Q Then if we move on to the next date in terms of the entries on page 156, 15 November, this is the "very aggressive", "very restless", and so on, note which you have, again, dealt with and asking Dr [Code A] to see her and so on. You indicated if it was unclear whether the patient's distress was mental or physical then you might use an opiate ...

E A Yes.

Q ... in circumstances you were presented with here. Can we look, please, at the position with regard to the drugs prescribed for this patient? I think the best page is to go to page 281, please. Do you see in relation to diamorphine on that page, it is 40-80?

F A That is correct.

Q That would be a reasonable range ---

A Yes.

Q --- in your view? Midazolam 20-80. We can see the administration of the diamorphine and the midazolam on the 19th. You were not prescribing that, but you were asked some questions about the fact that this lady had been on chlorpromazine, and it may be easier for you if we go back to the chronology in this case just to deal with this point. At the very beginning of the file there is another chronology. It will save you looking at different pages, I hope. Perhaps we can move on in the chronology, Dr Reid, to page 8. Do you have that?

G A Yes, I have. Thank you.

H Q Looking at the 19th, that is, in fact, a Friday, Friday the 19th, when she was seen by Dr Barton, she was prescribed and, indeed, it was administered

A chlorpromazine, diamorphine, administered at 9.25 in the morning?

A Yes.

Q I just need to note the times because I am going to ask you something about that. Midazolam also at the same time, 9.25?

A Yes.

B Q Chlorpromazine, would that have any bearing on what the appropriate amount of diamorphine or midazolam was to administer to the patient?

A Potentially in relation to midazolam.

Q Potentially because? If you would just explain why?

A They are both sedatives.

C Q It has a sedating effect as well.

A. Yes.

Q If you look at the top of the page, on that same page, it in fact is the previous day, the 18th, the Thursday. Fentanyl was a 25 skin patch every three days, was administered at 9.15 in the morning?

A Yes.

D Q If you can just take that on board in terms of what I am going to ask you. So the day before, fentanyl, 9.15 in the morning. The next day, as a result of matters which the Panel has already heard about, the drug prescription has changed. On the morning of Friday 19 November, is this generally right? The fentanyl would have just about reached its peak level?

A That would be my understanding, but to be absolutely sure I would have to check in the BNF.

E Q I am not going to press you or suggest that you can give precise answers, but the fentanyl your understanding – just to follow through the point – is something that takes effect gradually?

A Yes.

F Q The patch is put on, and is deliberately designed to provide to the patient ---

A Yes.

Q --- morphine ---

A --- a continuous low dose of opiate.

G Q Yes. And over a 24-hour period, assuming the patch is still on, it gradually builds up?

A That is correct.

Q This is very, very general.

A Yes.

Q So that 24 hours after the patch has been put on, it has reached more or less ---

A Steady state.

H Q And then it will decline?

A A Yes.

Q In fact, a fentanyl 25 patch, as I understand it, means 40 mg in 24 hours. Does that make sense?

A The equivalence to ---

B Q The equivalent to.... By the time the patient has reached peaked level, 24 hours later, they will have received 40 mg?

A I could not answer that.

Q I think, and I am sure you will have a sigh of relief, Dr Reid, I think if that is as far as you can take it, I will not go through the remainder of the conversion that I was going to go through in terms of what the sensible prescription of diamorphine would have been to take over from the fentanyl. Or is that something you can ---

C A No. Not really.

Q All right. You were asked about it by Mr Kark. I am not blaming him, and you gave an answer, but what you are really saying is, "I really can't sensibly answer as to what would be ---"?

A I do not have the expertise to answer that.

D MR LANGDALE: Then I am not going to press you on it. I am sorry it has taken so long, but that is all I need to ask you. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will break here, Mr Kark. The witness has been on the stand for over an hour. We will come back in twenty minutes, please, ladies and gentlemen. Doctor, I remind you, you are on oath. Please do not discuss matters. The Panel Assistant will take you somewhere where you can get some refreshment.

E THE WITNESS: Thank you.

(The Panel adjourned for a short time)

THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, everyone.

F MR KARK: Sir, before I ask Dr Reid any questions, may I start by mentioning that Professor Ford is at the back of the hearing room. He, of course, as an expert is in a different category to other witnesses. He is, I think, entitled to be present. He has also been receiving the transcripts of the hearing so he can comment, if necessary, on the evidence. I just thought I ought to mention that as a courtesy to the Panel.

G THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Kark. You have no objection to that, Mr Langdale?

MR LANGDALE: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

H

A

Re-examined by MR KARK

Q Dr Reid, I have some general questions to ask you in re-examination. Then I want to ask you just a few questions – very few, I think – about each of the individual patients that Mr Langdale has gone through with you. When you began your evidence being cross-examined, you gave evidence that your understanding was that Dr Barton spent a lot of her own time speaking to relatives, and she did a lot of counselling and that the nurses, I think, were fulsome in their praise of her?

B

A Yes.

Q Can I just ask where your information was coming from? You were going in one afternoon a week. Who primarily did you liaise with?

A That was from the nursing staff.

C

Q You say the nursing staff. I just want to see if we can tie that down a little bit. Was there any particular individual that you would tend to do your ward rounds with?

A No.

Q Not Sister Hamblin?

A It could be any of the senior nursing staff.

D

Q Did you speak yourself to any of those relatives?

A I only remember during the course of the year speaking to, well, three or four sets of relatives.

Q Over the course of the year, did you say?

A Well, I think ... Over the course of a year, oh ... It is difficult to remember.

E

Q All right.

A But eight sets of relatives, perhaps. It is very difficult to ...

Q All right.

A Eight sets of relatives. It is very difficult to recollect.

F

Q All right. You were asked about the notation “happy for nursing staff to confirm death”. You indicated that you would not expect Dr Barton to talk to you before making that notation?

A That is correct.

Q But do we take it – and I think you have given us evidence already – that that is a notation effectively that the patient is expected to die in the relatively near future?

A I would anticipate... In general terms, yes.

G

Q In terms of a move to palliative care ---

A Could I just clarify that a little?

Q Yes.

A Obviously there may be some patients who are extremely frail and for whom one recognises that they are unlikely to improve in their condition, but death need not be---

H

- A Q Absolutely ---
A --- perceived to be happening next week, not today or tomorrow.
- Q If there was a decision, however, to move to a palliative care route, rather than a treatment route, do we take it that equally you would not expect to be consulted about that in relation to each individual patient?
A That is correct.
- B Q And how would you expect that to be written up in the notes?
A I would expect there to be a note to the effect that the care plan had changed from, if you like, trying to get someone back on their feet to trying to keep them comfortable.
- Q Try to keep them comfortable. Or your notation, which we have just been looking at, I think, TLC?
C A Yes.
- Q You were asked about Dr Barton's resignation in the year 2000 and you told the Panel that your understanding was that she would be replaced by, I think, a full time clinical assistant?
A She was.
- D Q And ultimately did you say, I think, there were two and a half doctors? We understand what you mean by that – two and a half doctors looking after, did you say, 30 beds?
A Yes. That is the current position.
- Q You knew, I think, in 199 that there was a police inquiry into one of the deaths on the ward?
E A On Daedalus Ward that was.
- Q Yes.
A I was aware of that.
- Q At the GWMH hospital?
A Yes.
- F Q Were you also aware of the CHI investigation?
A Yes.
- Q Did those events, so far as you are aware, have any effect on staffing levels at the hospital?
A Not that I am aware of.
- G Q Why did it change?
A I beg your pardon?
- Q Why was there a change in the staffing levels?
A I am not aware that ---
- H Q You just told us there was a change in staffing levels?

- A A Yes, in terms of the medical staff.
- Q Did you find out why management might have thought that was necessary? Do you know what the thinking behind it was?
- A I think, certainly by that time, I had felt that the situation certainly from the point of view of medical cover was untenable. I had previously worked in Southampton where we had a GP, who was a clinical assistant, providing cover to our wards. Eventually the demands just outgrew the ability to keep pace. So I came to the view, as did my colleagues, that the model of cover we had just was not sustainable, just was not enough.
- B Q When did you come to that view?
- A I think I came to that view during 1999, early 2000.
- Q You also agreed with Mr Langdale when he suggested to you that missing notes were a common feature?
- C A On transfer.
- Q Again, can I just ask you about your source of evidence about that. We have heard some evidence, for instance, from the nurse manager of Daedalus Ward, Mr Beed, who told us that they used to come late in 1 in 10 or 1 in 20 cases.
- D A I certainly remember that it was a recurring theme that notes were incomplete, X-rays were missing, et cetera.
- Q Does that mean that they came but they came late, or they did not come at all?
- A Usually came late.
- Q Again, just dealing with the general questions, you said I think in answer to Mr Langdale that Oramorph was the first choice for strong opiates. Yes?
- E A Yes. Yes.
- Q I am not challenging that or doubting that. I am just seeking to clarify it with you. Co-codamol and co-dydramol – are they on the next level down?
- A Yes.
- Q In terms of the analgesic ladder?
- F A Yes.
- Q They are not opiates?
- A They are.
- Q They are opiates, but they are weaker opiates?
- A Weaker opiates.
- G Q So is there perceived to be a jump between co-dydramol and co-codamol and that sort of drug, and an opiate-based drug? Sorry – a stronger opiate?
- A Yes, but opiate... Morphine and diamorphine are stronger opiates.
- Q Co-codamol and co-dydramol are drugs which I think are given relatively regularly by GPs?
- H A Yes.

A Q I just want to try to understand what your evidence is, and Mr Langdale spent a bit of time trying to understand, I think, what your evidence is, about these variable prescriptions. Do you still have one of the examples of the prescription sheets which you can open out?

A No.

B Q Could I ask for you to be given one for a patient. Sir, we are just going to pass one to the witness, to use by way of example. (Sheet handed to the witness)

A Thank you.

Q Can you open it out?

A It is only the one sheet.

C Q Can we get another one? (Sheet returned to counsel) I just want to understand when you were giving us evidence about the opened out sheets, and you were talking about a blue plastic folder that they came in.

A Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, whilst we are looking for that ----

MR LANGDALE: The example is Ruby Lake in the file.

D THE CHAIRMAN: While we are looking for the document, I wonder, Mr Kark, is there any chance that one of these blue plastic folders could be obtained?

MR KARK: Yes. I do not know if they still exist, but I will explore this with the witness. (Further sheet handed to the witness)

A Thank you.

E Q Just fold that out. Which one do you have there? Is that Ruby Lake?

A Yes.

Q In our bundles we have in that particular file, just so we can try to follow the evidence, we have page 368A. That is marked "Prescription Sheet" with a big "B" in the corner. That is the front page, is it?

F A That is the front page.

Q And there are occasions, I think, when you were saying, effectively you only looked at one side of the sheet?

A That is right.

G Q Would that be the same side of the sheet with prescription sheet B on it?

A No.

Q It would be the other side?

A It would be the other side.

H Q Can you just help us in relation to this patient, what sheets there are on the other side? Can you just go from left to right?

A A On the reverse sheet, first page on the left is the "Daily Review Prescription" sheet. The next page is for "Nursing Use Only".

Q Could you slow down? Sorry. "Daily Review Prescription", and in that version that you are looking at, does it start with diamorphine 20-200?

A Yes, it does.

B Q And the first date is the 19th?

A Yes.

Q So that is on the far left hand – that is 368E. That is the left hand panel, as it were. What is the middle panel?

A It is headed "For Nursing Use Only – Exceptions To Prescribed Orders".

C Q That is on page 368F. And the last one?

A Is "Portsmouth Healthcare Trust Prescription Sheet" with a "B" in the top right hand corner.

Q That is our front sheet, in fact?

A Yes.

D Q So that is the right hand pane. And on the other side, does it start with Oramorph?

A Yes.

Q So that is in fact our page 368B. Would you regard that as the front or the back of the sheet? Perhaps it does not matter. The next middle panel, does that have digoxin?

A Yes.

E Q That is our page 368C. Is the far right-hand side blank?

A Yes.

Q This sheet, you say, would have been opened out.

A Yes.

Q And it would have been in a blue plastic folder.

F A Yes.

Q It slips into the folder from the side or the top and it is then attached where?

A It has a sort of hook on it and it sits on the bottom of the bed, the bed rail end.

Q I am sorry if these seem such obvious questions, but in order to write on the sheet, you have to take the sheet out of the folder.

G A Yes. Or you can partially pull it out to write on it.

Q How would you write on it?

A It is retained by a strip of cellophane along the top and a strip of cellophane along the bottom and there is a split in the cellophane at the join lines, so you can just pull the page out like that. That is my recollection.

H

- A Q Is there any regularity about which side faces you? If you are standing at the foot of the bed, which side do you say would be facing you?
A As you approach the patient?
- Q These sheets were at the foot of the patient's bed.
A Yes.
- B Q They are in clear blue plastic folders.
A They are a blue plastic folder retained by clear cellophane.
- Q They are attached to the bottom of the ---
A They hook over the rail at the bottom of the bed.
- C Q Which side of the sheet would normally be facing outwards?
A This side here, which is Oramorph and the regular prescriptions.
- Q If you wanted to look at the back of the prescription sheet, you would probably have to take it out of the folder, would you not?
A Yes.
- D Q Did you regularly or irregularly review prescriptions?
A I thought that on most occasions I did review prescriptions.
- Q Which prescriptions did you think you were reviewing?
A I would certainly open the chart like this and look to see what was being prescribed.
- E Q How would you know whether a patient was on a syringe driver or not?
A Well, usually it would be pretty obvious when one approached the bedside.
- Q Why?
A Because you could see the syringe driver.
- Q Where?
A It would usually be on a bedside table or locker.
- F Q Were syringe drivers ever put under the pillow of a patient that you can recall?
A I cannot recall. It might even be on top of the bed.
- Q It is just that we have heard some evidence about that. The other way, I suppose, of telling if a patient is on a syringe driver is if you did look at the chart.
A Yes.
- G Q You cannot help us as to how often you looked at the back of the prescription sheet.
A If a patient were on a syringe driver, I would look at this. Sometimes I recollect that Dr Barton actually wrote syringe drivers on this part of the chart, but if it was not in that part of the chart, then I would take it out and look at what was on the reverse side. That would be my normal practice.
- H Q If a patient was on a syringe driver, but it was under the covers or under a pillow, would you still, do you think, have realised if a patient was a syringe driver?

- A A Absolutely. The nursing staff would have reported it to me.
- Q So that would have caused you, would it, to have looked at what was going into the syringe driver?
- A On most occasions it would have done, yes. It should have done.
- B Q It seems to follow from that – and I think you have already given this evidence – that you must have seen these prescriptions.
- A Yes.
- Q But did nothing about it.
- A I certainly do not recollect them and I did not do anything in particular about Mrs Spurgeon's.
- C Q Do you know if the same system is used now, the blue plastic folders?
- A No, it is not.
- Q Do you still work ---
- A I am not working on Dryad Ward any longer.
- D Q I appreciate that, but you are still working in a hospital environment.
- A Yes, but not in a ward environment at the moment. I am not usually in a ward environment.
- Q You were shown a defence document. The first document I think you were shown is the document we have marked D4. At the bottom of this note, which is entitled "Learning Points from the Wilson Complaint" dated 27 October 1999, we can see it is an agreed protocol that Jane Barton, clinical assistant, writes up diamorphine for syringe drivers with doses ranging between 20 and 200 mg a day.
- E A Yes.
- Q I just want to understand your evidence about this. Were you then aware of any such protocol?
- A I was not aware of any such protocol.
- F Q If you had been aware of any such protocol, would you have done anything about it, do you think? Would it have disturbed you in any way, or would you have been content with it?
- A I think it would depend on what the content of the protocol was.
- G Q If there was a protocol which indicated that when a syringe driver with diamorphine in it was being started, it would be appropriate for the clinical assistant to write up a prescription for a dose range of between 20 and 200 mg of diamorphine, would you have thought that was acceptable, or not?
- A I think it depends on your interpretation of what is being – because it says "doses ranging between". So what I interpreted by that was that it could be a dose of 20 to 40, 20 to 80 and not just 20 to 200.
- H Q I understand. So you would say that is ambiguous?
- A Yes.

A

Q The next document that you were shown, D5, is your document. You wrote this up, did you? You devised this.

A Yes.

Q In December 1999.

A That is correct.

B

Q First of all, can you help the Panel why this was written up?

A As I said yesterday, I think the principal reason was in relation to the Wilson complaint, where we had had an independent medical review from a consultant in Southampton, Dr ---

C

Q I am not going to ask you to go any further than that. That is why you ---

A Yes. She commented on the wide prescribing range.

Q Did this in fact come into effect, this protocol?

A Not as laid out.

Q What was changed about it?

D

A What was an acceptable prescription range. This is a draft document prepared by me. I have previously said that I was not an expert in palliative care. My understanding certainly in relation to smaller doses of diamorphine was that the correct approach was to double the dose if pain had not been controlled. So I prepared this document on the basis of that. That document was then circulated for comment to members of the Medicine Prescribing Committee, which reflected a lot of disciplines, including palliative care, and I immediately got feedback from consultants in palliative care, saying that what I had suggested would not be an appropriate ...

E

Q Before you devised this document, did you actually take any advice, or was it really a draft?

A It was a draft to start a discussion.

Q You not being an expert in palliative care, where were you taking your basis of knowledge from for even starting this document?

F

A I suppose it was my belief that it was appropriate to double the dose.

Q Where had you got that from?

A Just my early experience in Southampton, but it was very limited.

Q Then you took advice and the advice that you received was that this would be wrong.

G

A That is correct.

Q And so it was changed.

A Yes.

Q Do you remember what it was changed to?

H

A I think, as is now the conventional wisdom, the wisdom is that if pain has not been controlled by the current dose, then it is permissible to increase the dose by up to 50 per cent the following day.

A
Q Under the heading "Prescription" – and again, we now I think appreciate that this was written without the benefit of advice – you write:

"Diamorphine may be written up as a variable dose to allow doubling on up to two successive days, e.g. 10-40 mg, 20-80, 60-240 mg ..."

B Did that also get changed?

A Oh, yes.

Q Because you appreciated it was wrong?

A Yes.

Q The very last line:

"If the patient's pain has not been controlled, the nurse should use his/her discretion as to the dose to be given within the next 24 hours, i.e. he or she may administer up to double the previous 24 hours dose."

All of that again – I know it follows from what you have just said – presumably was changed.

A Yes.

D

Q And the table that follows on the next page is not how it was eventually published?

A That is correct.

Q We can put that away. Can we just now look relatively briefly at the individual patients you have been asked about? The first was Enid Spurgin. I think the first thing I want to do is to clear up what I think has been thought to be an error in the chronology. If you have a look at these original notes. (Same handed) In our chronology, I am looking at page 6. This is Patient I. This is a very minor point perhaps, but I think it may be important to get it right. If we go to pages 373 and 374 and the chronology at page 6, do you see an entry for 24 March, "Ward round MMS"?

A Yes.

Q Then:

"Skin very thin and fragile lower legs
Needs to elevate"

That is not your ward round. Then underneath that, do we see a note saying:

"Dear Dr Lord

Many thanks for reviewing this pleasant 92 year old lady ..."

A Yes.

Q Over the page, that note continues:

H

A "She has proved quite difficult to get mobilised and her post-op rehabilitation may prove somewhat difficult."

Then we have a note from you dated apparently 23 March.

A Yes.

B Q And then over the page from that, we have a note dated 25 March.
A Yes.

Q Do you think you have got that date right, or do you think you may have made a mistake?

A I honestly have no idea. Given that it was the 24th, yes, I think it must be a mistake on my part. I am sorry.

C Q It looks, does it not, as though it must be the 24th?
A Yes.

Q It may just be worth us making a notation on the record itself at page 374. Indeed, when you wrote your letter at page 301, you wrote about seeing the patient on 24 March.

A I did, yes.

D Q So that would seem to be consistent.
A Yes.

Q If we stay with the clinical records, this was the lady for whom you recommended an x-ray.

A That is correct.

E Q It does not look as though that x-ray was ever performed.
A That is correct.

Q I think you confirmed this to Mr Langdale that it would not be for nursing staff to take that sort of decision.

A About whether someone should have an x-ray or not?

F Q Yes.
A No, it should be medical staff.

Q Once a doctor has written that a patient should have an x-ray, nurses have quite a lot of power but they would not normally have the power to overrule that direction?

A Not normally.

G Q It is right to say that that request for an x-ray does not appear to have been followed up by anybody.

A That is correct.

Q That decision, that direction, recommendation, call it what you will, took place on 7 April 1999. Yes?

H A Yes.

A Q It is in the clinical notes, I think, at page 27. Can we take it that if you are asking for an x-ray at that stage you are still regarding this patient as poorly but treatable?

A Potentially treatable.

Q Had you taken a decision at that stage that, in fact, this patient was for purely palliative care?

B A I do not think so.

Q By the time you next come to see her, or at least there is a note to that effect on 12 April. Yes?

A Yes.

Q You describe her as being, "Now [very] drowsy".

C A Yes.

Q No x-ray has been taken and she has been started, by the time you see her, on a high dose of diamorphine via syringe driver.

A She was on 20 mg BD of MST prior to that.

Q Yes, she was.

D A Her pain had not been controlled by that dose. I think we worked through the conversion factors, and the conversion yesterday, in my understanding, was at that time to halve the dose of morphine to convert to diamorphine and my limited understanding at that time in palliative care would have been to double the dose to get the pain under control.

Q Yes. I am sorry. All I asked you was that on 12 April when you next came to see her she was now very drowsy.

E A Yes.

Q You did not review your previous decision about an x-ray. Did you just not notice that or did you, by this stage, form a different view?

A I cannot remember, but my feeling was that on 7 April when I last saw her I felt that this lady's prognosis was extremely poor in terms of functional recovery and, indeed, of life. It is likely that this lady had a deep-seated wound infection. The British Orthopaedic Association produced a booklet in 2007 which talked about complications related to fractured neck of femur.

F MR KARK: Yes. Can we just stop there for a moment? That is not knowledge that you would have had in 1999.

MR LANGDALE: (Speaking off microphone)

G MR KARK: I want to know what your thinking was in 1999.

MR LANGDALE: Sir, with respect, I wonder if the witness could just finish what he was saying by way of explanation? Then if he has not answered the question, he can be asked to deal with it.

H THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, let the witness finish and then you can ask your question.

A

MR KARK: (To the witness) What were you going to tell us about something published in 2007?

A What I was going to say was the overall mortality from fractured neck of femur is about 25% a year. If you have a complication such as deep-seated wound infection the death rate approaches 50% and that booklet specifically says that few of those who recover will ever walk again, and that certainly has been my experience over the years of dealing with patients where the operation for a fractured neck of femur, that there have been complications.

B

Q I want to go back to your state of mind on 12 April 1999.

A Yes.

Q You record that the patient was, "Now [very] drowsy".

A Yes.

C

Q Can we take it that you would then have looked at the prescription sheet to discover why?

A Yes.

Q You found that the patient was on a high dose of diamorphine.

A Yes.

D

Q Which you reduced by half.

A Yes.

Q Was the fact that the patient was now on a syringe driver relevant to your decision as to whether it would be worth pursuing an x-ray, as you had advised five days before?

A I do not think so.

E

Q What had changed?

A I felt this lady was now terminally unwell. There was constant reference throughout her notes, in the nursing records in particular, to this lady being in pain and my view was that this lady had gone through three weeks of real suffering where the pain had never really been properly controlled and I felt her outlook was pretty hopeless and the overriding priority by that stage should be to keep her comfortable.

F

Q At the time that you saw her, the time of this review, we can take it, I think, that you could not speak to the patient, or if you could speak to her she could not answer you?

A That is correct.

G

Q Because she was not rousable?

A That is correct.

Q Did you consider then that whether you made the decision or not a decision had been made to treat this patient palliatively?

A I think that was the correct decision.

H

Q I did not ask you that. I asked you whether you thought that decision had

A been made.

A Yes.

Q Thank you. You were also asked, and I think this was as a generality - it was put to you, I think, you cannot find out what will happen to a patient unless you take them off opiates.

A That is correct.

B

Q I just want to explore that with you for a moment. If you have a patient who is unconscious, unrousable, you are not going to be able to find out what is going on with the patient in terms of their sensation, et cetera.

A That is right.

Q Why cannot you simply reduce the opiates until they become rousable?

A I did reduce the opiates.

C

Q I understand that, but the answer you gave to Mr Langdale was you cannot find out what will happen without taking the patient off opiates. Is there a distinction between taking them off opiates and reducing the opiates?

A Yes, there is.

D

Q You can, presumably, reduce the opiates?

A Yes, or stop them.

Q You spoke early on in your cross-examination about the experience of the nurses?

A Yes.

E

Q Your impression was that they were, in general, no doubt, very experienced nurses.

A That is correct.

Q Did you know what their training had been in the use of either syringe drivers or opiates?

A No.

F

Q In this case we know that a nurse called Nurse Barrett decided, after your intervention to half the dose of diamorphine, to double up on the midazolam.

A Yes.

MR KARK: Which I think you described yesterday as astonishing.

MR LANGDALE: Sir, with respect, my friend cannot put that she made a decision to double up because he does not know why she did. It may be a mistake.

G

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Mr Kark, all we can say is that she did double up.

MR KARK: I accept that correction. (To the witness) We know that she did it. Yes?

A Yes.

H

Q You describe that, as I think you said yesterday, as astonishing?

A A Yes, given what I had found.

Q If that were a deliberate decision, it would, in your view, have been quite wrong?

A Yes.

B

Q If it is a mistake, is it a serious mistake?

A Yes.

Q You were asked about indications that this patient had had a CVA?

A Yes.

Q We know that the patient was leaning to the left.

A Yes.

C

Q Was that what you took to be the prime indicator of the CVA?

A From that note it is possible the patient could have had a CVA.

Q Yes, well, all sorts of things could have happened.

A Yes, it could.

D

Q The fact that the patient was leaning to the left, did you take that as being a possible indicator that she had had a CVA?

A A possible indicator.

Q Yes. This patient had a painful right hip. Might that cause a patient to lean to the left?

A Indeed it might, but it had not been commented on before.

E

Q No. I want to move on then, please, to Patient J. I have not very much to ask you about that, but you commented on the earlier annotation, "not for 555".

A Yes.

Q You indicated, as I understood it, and I want your help about this, that that would potentially indicate non-referral back to hospital for treatment. Is that what you were saying?

F A What it would indicate is that that decision, I think, would indicate that one would have concerns about their overall prognosis.

Q One has to be careful, of course. This is an annotation made by another doctor.

A Yes.

G

Q At a particular point in that patient's illness.

A Yes.

Q Are you saying that once "555" is written into somebody's notes, that every doctor thereafter is likely to follow that and that it may have an effect on their future treatment, not just for resuscitation but for other treatments as well?

H A Decisions about CPR are complex decisions and decisions about the appropriateness of being for resuscitation or not can be a fluid one. In other words, there will clearly be patients who have incurable illnesses who are likely to

A die and their resuscitation status will not change. On the other hand, there are patients who may be extremely ill at a point in time and they will be deemed inappropriate at that time for resuscitation, but when they improve it is appropriate to review their resuscitation status and change it if that seems appropriate.

Q So far as other treatment is concerned, and this patient may be a good example, it seems he had a GI bleed?

B A That is correct.

Q The fact that "not for 555", or not for resus, whatever is written in the notes, is written into his notes is or is not an indication that his gastrointestinal bleed should not be treated?

A It is not an indication that it should not be treated but it may not be appropriate. It depends on the ---

C Q That would be for the doctor ---

A Reassessing.

Q It would require, would it, a reassessment?

A Yes.

D Q If we go to the clinical notes at page 56 and the page before, page 55, he had been seen by Dr Ravindrane. Yes?

A Yes.

Q I think among other things, it seems as if it was he who prescribed Clexane. Yes?

E Q I am not going to go through the notes, but I think the evidence will probably demonstrate that he did. Then on 26 August the patient is seen by Dr Barton and she decides he is not well enough to transfer to?

A Acute unit.

Q Then we see these two notations:

"Keep comfortable
I am happy for nursing staff to confirm death"

F A Yes.

Q Is that an indication at that stage, on 26 August, that the patient was for treatment or for palliative care?

A For palliative care.

G Q The decision to treat a 67 year old man, as I think this patient was ---

A Yes.

Q --- for palliative care would require what sort of assessment?

H A It would require an assessment of what the underlying prognosis for this gentleman would be and the seriousness of the illness which had developed and, therefore, will it be appropriate to actively manage or not.

A Q We know that on 30 August syringe driver was started, so by the time you see him on 1 September you found him to be, "Rather drowsy, but comfortable".
A Yes.

Q We see:

B "Remains confused
For TLC ..."

So that is another annotation that this patient is for palliative care?

A Yes.

Q At the time that you made that notation did you take it that that was already the course that this patient was on?

A Yes.

C Q Finally, I do not think we need to turn up any notes for Patient K, I just want to ask you about your understanding of fentanyl – what a 25 microgram patch means. What is your understanding of what a 25 microgram fentanyl patch would convert to? Let us take it 24 hours into its life, as it were.

D A Right. Could I say that I think there has been a change in the *British National Formulary* about what the equivalence in morphine or the fentanyl patch has been between 1999 and now.

Q Right.

A I would have to reference ---

E Q You said to Mr Langdale, and I did not catch quite what you said, I think you said it is the equivalent of 40 mg?

A No. Mr Langdale put that to me.

Q That was being suggested to you?

A Yes.

F Q I thought you accepted that, or you ---

A No. I said I could not be sure.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark, perhaps the witness could finish the answer he started a moment ago when he said "I would have to have reference to..." and then you interrupted him.

G THE WITNESS: To a *British National Formulary* before 1999, and a current one. I think ---

MR KARK: I was not ignoring that. I was just about to take the witness to it, but I wanted to know what your evidence was before you referred to the *BNF*. Are you saying that you would not have been sure what the equivalence was?

A Not without looking at the *British National Formulary*.

H

A Q I am not criticising you for that for a moment, but I just wanted to understand what your evidence was. Would you take out Panel bundle 1, which is to your left, and turn up tab 3 and go to page 12. Just to help you, this is a *BNF* for September 1998. Yes? So we are going back to at least the right ---

A I cannot see a date on it, but ---

B Q If you look at the first page, you probably can.
A Thank you.

Q Yes? Okay. Then if you go to our page 12 – it is page 201 within the book – do you have that? Look at the page numbers with a line outside, the far right hand side at the bottom of the page.

A Yes.

C Q The heading is “Fentanyl”?

A Yes.

Q We can see that the contra-indications and side-effects are those for morphine salts?

A Yes.

D Q We can see under “Administration”:

“Long duration of action. In view of the long duration of action, patients who have experienced severe side-effects should be monitored for up to 24 hours after patch removal.”

That is because the effects of the patch wear on?

A Yes.

E Q Is that the brand name, “Durogesic”?

A Yes.

Q But it is fentanyl by a brand name. If we look underneath that, do you see “Administration”?

A Yes.

F Q In rather small writing. It tell us doctors where to put a patch. Then do you see these words:

“Patients who have not previously received a strong opioid analgesic, initial dose, one ‘25/micrograms/hour’ patch replaced after 72 hours; patients who have received a strong opioid analgesic, initial dose based on previous 24-hour opioid requirement (oral morphine sulphate 90 mg over 24 hours + one ‘25 micrograms/hour’ patch...”.

G A Yes.

Q So that gives us the conversion, I think. It is the equivalent of giving somebody 90 mg of Oramorph?

A Yes.

H

A MR KARK: That is all that I ask you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Kark. Dr Reid, we come to the stage now where the barristers have completed their questions, at least for the moment, and it falls to the Panel to consider whether they have any questions, then, to ask them of you.

B We have already taken the opportunity as a Panel in the last break to discuss, Mr Kark and Mr Langdale, what sort of time scale we would need before we would be ready to put our questions. I can tell you for the time that we have now reached, that we would not be ready to put any questions to the doctor before lunch.

C It is now ten to twelve. We would need all of that time to have any prospect for one o'clock. What I am going to say is that we will not be in a position to put questions before two o'clock. I very much hope that at two o'clock we will be in such a position. We will take a shorter lunch to try to ensure that. Clearly the doctor has given some important testimony and it is very important the Panel consider carefully those questions they would wish to ask of him now so that we do not find ourselves having to ask him to come back on another occasion.

D Doctor, I am afraid that means that you are now going to be released this side of lunch, other than, of course, you are free now to go and take a longer lunch. Could you please be back here for two o'clock? What will happen is that the Panel will put their questions, and I hope they will be shorter than they would have been if we did not take the time; there will not be a repetition, I hope, of questions. When we have asked our questions of you, the final hurdle is that then the barristers are entitled to ask any questions which might have arisen out of our questions. That, then, will be it. If you would return at two o'clock I would be most grateful. I remind you that you remain on oath. You should not discuss the case with anybody and you should not allow anybody to talk to you about the case.

E THE WITNESS: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Two o'clock, please, ladies and gentlemen.

(Luncheon adjournment)

F THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, everyone. Doctor, I sorry that we have kept you out for so long. As you will appreciate, your testimony raised a lot of issues that are of particular interest to the Panel. If it sweetens the pill slightly, I think as a result of our discussions, we will now be asking fewer questions than we would have been if we had just gone straight into questions from the Panel.

G THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are going to start with questions from Mrs Pamela Mansell, who is a lay member of the Panel.

Questioned by THE PANEL

H MRS MANSELL: I think some of my questions might reflect that I am a lay member, so would you bear with that. I would like to first have a look at Enid Spurgin. I understand you

A to say that there was some difference between when you assessed this lady and when she was actually admitted to the Dryad ward and there was some incongruency in between the letter from Haslar to Dryad and what the lady was actually like. When I actually looked at these two, your initial assessment and the letter from them, I actually had difficulty in seeing that incongruency – that there was not a consistency there. Does that make sense? Obviously not.

A You are saying there was not an inconsistency between ---

B Q That is right. That is what I understood you to say. It was not entirely consistent between how this patient appeared when she got to Dryad Ward and when you saw her, and the letter from Haslar to Dryad?

A There would appear to be an inconsistency between my assessment when I saw Mrs Spurgin in the Haslar Hospital and the letter which accompanied Mrs Spurgin from Haslar Hospital. That is Captain Code A I think, who wrote that letter.

C Q Right. Could we just explore that inconsistency a little bit because when I looked at it, I thought, "I can see there is a lot of consistency actually there, rather than the inconsistency", so I think I have the letter on page 23 in bundle I. That was the letter from the ward. I have a feeling – I think if we go to 301, that was your actual letter. Am I right? I am not very good with these references.

A Shall I ---

D Q You see. I can see that what you are saying, the main problems are the pain in the right hip ---

A Yes.

Q -- and a swollen right thigh, and even a limited range of passive movement. When you actually saw her you were saying that there was a limited amount of movement. In a way, they are actually saying here that she can only move aided with two nurses and a zimmer frame. They are also saying there is not a lot of movement there, are they not?

E A Yes. Perhaps it might be important to say there is a difference between active movement and passive moment.

Q Right?

A So when I saw this lady, I would deduct from my letter that she was not capable of lifting her leg of her own volition because of the pain.

F

Q Right?

A And when I saw her, even passive moment – that was me lifting her leg for her – even a limited range of movement, that was very painful for her. I find it just a little bit surprising that in the transfer letter from Haslar it says that she is now mobile from bed to chair with two nurses, when I found that even just lifting her leg a little of the bed was extremely painful.

G

Q Painful for her. So that might be around this whole acceptance of pain, et cetera. That could be an explanation or --- ?

A Sorry?

H Q It may well be that whatever the pain, this person was got out of bed and ---

A Yes. I am not disputing ----

- A
- Q Okay. There could be a lot of explanations for that. That takes me one path, but I am under the impression that she was very with-it?
- A Compos mentis, yes.
- Q A compos mentis, quite with-it lady, so she was actually coming to Dryad for treatment in terms of mobilisation. She was not a palliative care?
- B
- A Not at that stage.
- Q Can I then take you to Dr Barton's assessment on page 27?
- A Sorry? Dr --- ?
- Q I can see that Dr Barton's assessment here on page 27 is consistent with yours, that you want the plan to sort out the analgesia?
- C
- A Yes.
- Q Okay. But this also tells me that this lady is not continent.
- A Yes.
- Q And my understanding was that this lady was continent but had some accidents – incontinence of urine because of the immobility, the lack of getting out of bed. We have heard from another witness that that can actually be quite transient. It is not necessarily a symptom of old age, of the systems breaking down.
- D
- A The lack of continence.
- Q The lack of continence in this particular lady.
- A I think if someone were having what you describe as "accidents", I describe that as not being continent.
- E
- Q Right, okay. A lot of your patients are actually palliative?
- A Yes.
- Q Who are incontinent?
- A Yes.
- F
- Q Then this lady was different, in that it was occasional, not continuous?
- A Yes. It is certainly recognised that if you are immobile, you are more likely to be incontinent.
- Q Because you cannot get to the bedpan, or whatever else?
- A That is right.
- G
- Q Absolutely. But how would this initial assessment by Dr Barton enable me to understand those differences in this lady, to another lady who is coming in for palliative care?
- A In Dr Barton's assessment she says that Mrs Spurgin is not weight-bearing.
- Q Yes?
- A So that clearly could be an influence on her continence.
- H
- Q Yes. Yes?

- A A I think recording someone is being incontinent is just recording a fact. It is not making a prognosis or indicating that someone should only be for palliative care or whether she is for active care. I do not think it is saying that.
- Q Right. Okay. But in this is suggesting to me or to the nurses that there is a treatment programme here that we may have to look at?
- A What is in it is Dr Barton's statement "Try and sort out analgesia".
- B Q That is right; that is right. But you have already indicated in your letter that you are not entirely satisfied that there is not actually – excuse me if I get this wrong – an orthopaedic problem. It is not actually a problem with the operation.
- A I asked for some reassurance in my letter that all was well orthopaedically with Mrs Spurgin's hip, and there is an entry from the orthopaedic surgeon the day after I saw her which does not make any reference to that. I find that not to be an unusual experience and I have tended to work from the basis that if it is in the notes, if they have said nothing, then they are happy with how things are orthopaedically.
- C Q Right, okay. But the pain continues in the hip?
- A Yes.
- D Q What is the risk from this of actually the focus becoming on the analgesia and actually controlling the pain through analgesia rather than looking at whether there is another problem?
- A Yes. Normally one would expect pain after a hip replacement, and that the pain would gradually ease with time.
- Q Absolutely. That is right.
- A If that does not appear to be the pattern, that is clearly the stage at which one should be thinking about or further assessing what is actually going wrong with this lady's hip.
- E Q Right?
- A I think the question for me is, at what stage following the operation does one make that assessment, and that may be different for different doctors. Some may have a much earlier threshold for investigating than others. That is just human behaviour.
- F Q So when you are looking at an initial assessment like this and you are setting out something for the nurses, what else might you expect to see in there that tells you there has to be a period of review? You are saying that really, when you are dealing with it it might be a matter of a period ---
- A --- of time.
- G Q --- and see how the pain is decreasing?
- A I think what one would expect to see is a progress report, in terms of, is the pain settling and is the patient now starting to mobilise and if not, then initiating further investigation. But I think the overriding priority at the time of transfer was pain control.
- Q That is fine, but you see the reason why I am asking questions around this is, when we actually get to the 6 April this patient is, I understand, seen by Dr Barton and Dr Barton addresses the analgesia and increasing the dosage. Okay?
- H A Yes.

A

Q But does not actually address what is causing that pain not to be going away?

A Yes. Well ---

Q So it indicates a certain mind-set, or perhaps does it indicate that certain mind-set, that the focus is more on the analgesia rather than it is that this patient is in here for mobilised treatment, et cetera?

B

A I saw the patient the following day and felt that investigation was appropriate.

Q That is right.

A As I have said before, I think we have different thresholds for at which time we should do that, but I would have thought that by that time it was appropriate to investigate, because the pain was not settling.

C

Q But it is arguable that the same pattern is then progressed because the patient does not go for the x-ray? As far as we know, nothing is actioned. The patient does not go for the x-ray and then, of course, by the time you next see the patient the patient is then on the syringe driver?

A Yes.

D

Q And is drowsy, and unrousable?

A Yes.

Q And so dehydrated because they are not getting fluid, et cetera.

A Well ---

E

Q So has that focus on the analgesia prevented any addressing the treatment plan?

A I do not think so. Certainly from my perspective, when I saw this lady on the 7th, I was clearly concerned about what was going on in her right hip. Without going into all the detail, I think that the most likely thing is that she had a deep-seated wound infection.

Q Infection – yes.

A What can one do about that is then the next question. An x-ray is the first step in that. An x-ray may show absolutely nothing. Either way, one would then consider, “Is this lady well enough to refer back to an orthopaedic opinion?” What I would say is that if this lady did have a deep-seated infection, the consequences of that are fairly awful, in terms that it usually requires going back to theatre. This is already a lady who was very frail, so there would be risks simply from the anaesthetic. Also, the operation that is carried out leaves someone with considerable shortening of the leg and that can often make mobilisation very difficult. We know that developing a deep-seated wound infection carries a very poor outlook, so even with referral onto the orthopaedic surgeon, I would have been very pessimistic about this lady’s prospects for surviving, let alone for walking.

G

Q But the alternative to that is to accept that the patient is just going to relapse into death, is it not? Move towards death?

A Unfortunately we recognise that is a complication of ---

Q That is assessing the risks, is it not? I am not certain how.... I can see what you want to initiate here – the x-ray ?

H

A Yes.

A

Q But I am not certain how those risks were actually assessed by Dr Barton and by the nursing team?

A There is no record of that having been done that I can see.

Q So you come in after, and find out that the x-ray has not been ---

A --- done.

B

Q And that the patient has moved to being on a syringe driver and unrousable and imminent death is near. What should we have expected a reasonably competent consultant to actually have initiated at that point to ensure the protection of patients?

A When I saw her on 12 April?

Q Yes?

A I think it is to look at what has happened and to review what has happened to this lady up until that point.

C

Q Right?

A I have outlined what I felt the likely prognosis would be and then to make a decision about do we actively intervene, or do we treat this lady palliatively? I believe that is what I did.

D

Q I am not certain that you actually did make the decision to treat palliatively, the patient is already on the syringe driver and ---

A To continue the treatment.

Q There was no alternative, was there, at that point? You are saying once they are on a syringe driver you do not actually take -- and he is unrousable -- you do not take people off that?

E

A It would be unusual to do that.

Q That is right.

A But this lady, having had her operation on something like 19 March and three weeks later she is still in severe pain and, in fact, if anything in more pain that she was at the start.

F

Q Exactly. That is ---

A That indicates to me a very poor prognosis.

Q Is not the pain because the cause of it had not been addressed again?

A What I have said, even if ... I just think that the odds were really stacked against a good recovery for this poor lady.

G

Q I can hear that, yes, but I am not certain as to how that balancing act was actually carried out. Then, if you say there was a review at the end -- a review of this lady's decline and the failure to take up the x-ray -- I am not certain what the outcome of that review actually was?

A I felt by that time the x-ray had become irrelevant.

H

Q Obviously, yes.

A A That is why I did not pursue it, because I felt this lady's prognosis was so poor that it was just right to treat her palliatively because she had been, as far as I can see, in a lot of pain since day one, and in increasing pain.

Q Yes. Yes. Okay.

B A But the outcome is from trying to... It is a very difficult complication to manage – deep-seated wound infection after fractured neck of femur. The outcomes are extremely poor. I mentioned earlier some of the figures that are associated with that. Those are figures, if you like, across the board. This lady was 92, so her outcome is likely to be worse than the average outcome simply because of her age.

Q Yes, yes. But having heard from an earlier consultant giving us evidence, there is certainly the view that you would move to looking to actually rule out whether or not further surgery was necessary or further treatment of the hip would have been necessary?

C A I can only speak from my experience, which is that such patients do very badly and, as I said, there is a document the British Orthopaedic Association published just two years ago which affirms that.

Q Can I move on then slightly, and look with you around palliative care. What does a good assessment – what should a good assessment – in relation to palliative care look like? What would you expect to see in there?

D A First of all, what is the patient's diagnosis and, resulting from that, what is their prognosis for quality of life, et cetera. That is going to be the starting point.

Q Yes?

E A Then, if a patient develops an intercurrent illness, depending on the severity of that, whether it is appropriate to treat that or not in the context of someone with a poor prognosis. In that situation, I think that often we are aiming to relieve symptoms rather than looking to curing or to treating very serious illness arising in someone who already had a poor prognosis.

Q Right, right. So in a case like Mrs Spurgin, is that what you would have expected to have seen here? This lady moves from coming in for mobilisation treatment and we see here drift – if I use that word – or move into not just palliative care but end of life care. Where is that? What assessment?

F A As I have said, the patient with fractured neck of femur is in an extremely serious condition. We know that across the board, with all patients with fractured neck of femur, there is a 25 per cent mortality rate at one year. So although someone may appear to be fit, well and going to have a simple operation, it is a marker of poor outcomes. It is not infrequent to see people who have previously been well who die from complications of fractured neck of femur.

G Q But when I read the guidelines about palliative care, it talks about bringing together all the relevant people to decide on the prognosis, the outcome. Why would you not have sought the view of a consultant from the acute ward or someone who deals with the orthopaedic side to actually come and review this lady?

H A That was the thinking behind asking for the x-ray, to try and find out what is happening, with a view to them seeking orthopaedic review, because the first thing an orthopaedic surgeon would ask me, if I had referred a patient to him, is, "Well, have you re-x-rayed the hip?"

- A
- Q But that did not happen here.
A No, it did not happen.
- Q It went from one to the other without that detailed assessment, this person's prognosis was so poor, moving into palliative care. In fact, we moved from the one to the end of life care.
- B
- A Yes. I am sure that was an appropriate ...
- Q Also when I look at the palliative care guidelines, it advises that you have to take account of the fact that to constantly make sure that the drugs are not making the patient worse than the actual cause or problem for the patient. So how did you see that the controls were put in so that constantly was being reviewed within palliative care?
- C
- A There is nursing documentation to support the fact that this lady was really in pain for almost the entire length of her stay in hospital, both Haslar and at the War Memorial Hospital. Drug charts and the nursing documentation show that Mrs Spurgin was needing increasing doses of diamorphine to try and control her pain. Now, in most situations, when one is aiming for palliation, one does manage to – what one is aiming to achieve is pain control and someone being alert, conscious, but sometimes it is not possible to achieve that and the level of pain control or sedation needed to control patients' symptoms is such that it makes them drowsy. I wish it were thus that one could always palliate and leave people alert and orientated, but sometimes unfortunately it just does not happen.
- D
- MRS MANSELL: I will leave it there. Thank you very much.
- THE CHAIRMAN: Mr William Payne is also a lay member of the Panel.
- E
- MR PAYNE: Good afternoon. If I could turn you back to Patient I, page 27. You had seen this lady prior to entry on to the ward.
A Yes. I saw her in Haslar Hospital.
- Q You had known that she was in pain then.
A Yes.
- F
- Q Just before we go any further, on page 27, I think it is Dr Barton's note, can you tell me what date that is? I thought it was the 26th.
A I think it is.
- Q It is the 26th. Yours is the 7th.
A Yes.
- G
- Q If you turn back to page 23, can you tell me where the date is there, because I am struggling to find that. I cannot see a date. Can you?
A No, I cannot see a date.
- Q But it talks about "she was admitted on the 19th".
- H
- THE CHAIRMAN: It has just been pointed out to me on page 23, above the extension number, there is the number 260399. There are no full stops or slashes, but it looks like a date.

A

THE WITNESS: It looks like a date.

MR PAYNE: So that was written on the same day as this.

A Yes.

B

Q 26.3.99 is a Tuesday and you see the patient the following week on the Wednesday.

A Yes.

Q You have said that she is still in a lot of pain.

A Yes.

Q But you still think on the 7th there is still reason to look at it positively, because you want him to do an x-ray.

C

A I think I would have been looking at it negatively.

Q But you want him to do an x-ray, you want him to find out the cause, et cetera, et cetera.

A Yes.

D

Q I should think that is more of a positive than a negative, but fair enough. If those types of things had taken place on the 26th ----

A I do not think it would have been appropriate to do it at that stage. This comes back to the question of at what stage, if someone is in continuing pain, does one then start investigating. Some people will mobilise on day two after a fractured neck of femur, some very elderly ladies. Some people may take ten days, two weeks to really get going, simply because of pain. So it is unpredictable.

E

Q But you have told us that when you first saw this lady, the mobility, you showed us lifting her leg with your hands and she was in a lot of pain.

A Yes.

Q So surely the closer you are to trying to reverse the problem, nearer to the actual operation would give a better prognosis of the final outcome, would it?

F

A I think the other thing to say is that x-raying someone in this condition often does not tell you very much. The x-ray can be completely normal with a deep-seated hip infection. The longer time goes by, the more likely the x-ray is to become abnormal. What an x-ray could tell us was the collapse of the head of the femur, that the femur had dislocated. I think that both of these are much less likely than a deep-seated wound infection. To come back to your question, it is a matter of judgment at what stage you think it is appropriate to investigate. I would not be thinking of x-raying someone let us say if they were still in pain after a week after their first neck of femur. I would still be thinking that this could still be natural recovery.

G

Q It would still follow that the closer from the operation that you identified, for instance, the infection, the more chance you have of stopping that infection getting bigger, curing that infection quicker.

A My guess would be yes, is the answer to that. I am not an orthopaedic surgeon, but often these deep-seated wound infections are extremely difficult to treat.

H

A Q I see no note from the 26th to the 7th within this. There is no record of any deterioration or action being taken. You go to the nursing notes and I have tried to read through those and it talks about "still in pain", "still in pain", "still in pain", but no-one is trying to find out what the cause is. I am right in thinking that you visit once a week.

A That is right.

B Q But Dr Barton visits every day.
A That is right.

Q And there is no record.
A That is right.

Q Then on the 7th you instigate a plan of some sort with regard to x-ray.
A Yes.

C Q Then you visit again the following Monday, which is the 12th, and nothing has been done.

A There are records in the nursing notes about some (inaudible) which has recurred. I acknowledge that there is not anything written. In an ideal world, one would have wanted that to be happening.

D Q You see, earlier in your evidence you said that they knew more about it than you and you thought that the nursing staff and Dr Barton, you had the utmost confidence in them and those types of things.

A Yes.

Q Yet here we have a situation where you actually instigated a plan and nothing has been done, nothing is carried out. I am not from your industry, but in my industry, somebody would be wanting to know why.

E A On my ward round, I would be gathering information from the nursing staff about what had happened since ...

Q Because you would not be able to take it from here, would you?

A No, I would not. Definitely not.

F Q So there is something amiss with the recording. I am moving away from that now, doctor. Could I just take you to page 169? It is the front page of the concertina sheet, the drug sheet. If you go down two-thirds of the page, under 9:

"Put date prescription needs to be reviewed in 'review' box of regular prescription section."

G If you turn to page 174, I think that sheet is all Dr Barton's signature and there is no review date.

A No, there is not.

Q On any of it. This is Patient F and there is no review date on any of those. Surely a review date is exactly what it says.

A Yes.

H

- A Q Therefore if there is no review date, these prescriptions are never-ending.
A There should be a review date.
- Q Can you remember bringing that to ---
A No, I cannot remember.
- B Q Do you think that is an ideal situation, to have no review date?
A No.
- Q One of the allegations against Dr Barton is that she did not keep clear and accurate and contemporaneous notes on a number of things and one of them is the drug regime.
A Yes.
- C Q Would you say that that is a failing on Dr Barton's part?
A Yes. There is clear instruction on the prescription sheet to complete a review date.
- Q Initially you told us – correct me if I am wrong – that you thought that Dr Barton and Sister Hamblin had more experience in the use of these opiates.
A They did have more practical experience of using them.
- D Q I think you also said that if you had come to something outside the normal, you would have referred to the BNF.
A Yes.
- Q Where they may have more experience than you, in 1999 you were a consultant.
A Yes.
- E Q You were a very experienced person in your field.
A Yes.
- Q You have said to us that if you would have seen the prescriptions for 20 to 200, that wide range, you would have done something about that.
A Yes. It was my responsibility to do something about it.
- F Q When you saw that – and you reduced one from 80 to 40.
A I did not recollect seeing prescriptions for 20 to 200 mg until the police interviewed me and produced a prescription sheet which demonstrated that.
- Q With the greatest of respect, doctor, I have difficulty accepting that, because you told me that the sheets are there, you are reviewing the patients, you are on a ward round with people that you say have more experience in this than you and, before you can make a judgment, you must review all the facts.
G A I accept that I must have looked at this prescription, but I have no recollection of it. I should have done something about it. I fully recognise that.

MR PAYNE: Thank you very much indeed. That is all.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am going to introduce Ms Joy Julien, who is also a lay member of the Panel.

H

A MS JULIEN: Good afternoon. My question is around your supervisory role in relation to Dr Barton and also in relation to the nursing staff. Earlier on in your evidence, you gave examples, quite a few examples, of situations where you would not have expected Dr Barton to consult with you.

A Yes.

B Q What my question is is whether you can give me some idea of the extent of your knowledge of the amount of discretion that Dr Barton and the nursing staff had in their day-to-day work. For example, in relation to the syringe drivers, we have heard evidence about syringe drivers being prescribed without a specific start date. Were you aware of that?

A I am not aware of it being without a specific start date.

Q No incident at all of that?

A Do you mean that it was not recorded on the ...

C Q That there would not be a specific date as to when it would commence.

A I think I said that in our palliative care ward today we do admit some patients who may not be immediately in need of opiates, but I think I described the sort of patient who is perhaps recovering from a very serious operation, is very frail and one was not sure whether this person was going to get better or whether they might in fact continue to decline. In that situation, we would write up prescriptions in advance. In other words, the prescription would be dated, but there would be no start date on it.

Q Are you talking about via syringe drivers?

A Yes.

Q So you would consider that appropriate?

E A What I cannot be sure of, because I do not work in the palliative care ward, is whether that is a syringe driver or whether – I think that is written up as Oramorph, such and such a dose, three to four-hourly as required. That is from memory of what we do on a palliative care ward today, but I do not work there, so I cannot

Q If that were the position would you consider it appropriate for a syringe driver without a specific start date? That level of discretion, would you consider that appropriate?

F A I think it would come back to the clinical condition of the patient. In other words, if it was someone who was very frail, let us say might be having difficulties in eating and swallowing, one might in these circumstances consider it appropriate to be considering subcutaneous drugs rather than oral drugs but I am not sure of whether a syringe driver would be appropriate at that stage.

Q Is that because, do you think, of the risk involved in that way of management?

G A Syringe drivers are applied when patients are no longer able to swallow or where you feel that a patient would be caused a lot of distress by repeated injections.

Q Are there risks involved? I am not sure I understand what you are saying.

H A I do not think there is any greater risk than giving orally. It is just I think we should be giving drugs orally where we possibly can.

A Q Let us suppose there was a syringe driver prescription without a specific start date. Would you consider that that would be operating in the patient's best interests, working within that format?

A It would depend on the individual patient and their circumstances.

Q You saying it could be in the patient's best interests?

B A I think it could be, if, again, the situation is someone who is very frail, having difficulties swallowing, or let us say a very thin skin and you knew that repeated injections were likely to be painful, then in these circumstances it might be appropriate to prescribe a syringe driver.

Q Yes, but my question does not really focus around prescribing syringe drivers *per se*, it is about the flexibility regarding the commencement, if you see what I mean? There is a slight difference.

C A I think if you reasonably anticipate that the patient may become distressed within the next few days then I think it is reasonable to prescribe in an anticipatory way.

Q What about from the nursing staff's point of view? We have heard that some nursing staff, they have actually told us that they have the flexibility to initiate in certain circumstances the syringe drivers. How do you see that?

D A I am sorry. Could you repeat that?

Q The nursing staff could initiate the syringe drivers off their own volition, without having to consult with Dr Barton or any other doctor.

A I cannot say I was aware of that.

Q If that were the case, what would be your view on that?

E A I think it would depend on the individual situation. If Dr Barton had assessed the patient and felt that a syringe driver might become appropriate because she is not available, I do not feel it is unreasonable for nursing staff to commence that syringe driver because she is immediately available.

Q I think you said earlier on in your testimony that you were not really aware of the level of training that the nursing staff had had.

A No, I was not.

F Q So even taking that into consideration you would still consider it appropriate?

A When I came onto Dryad ward the nursing staff seemed to be very au fait with syringe drivers and I made the assumption that they knew how to manage this, but I did not enquire as to what the specific training was.

G Q Do you think there were any potential risks, that way of operating?

A Administration of opiates has to be undertaken by two qualified nurses and so I think that there was some safeguards in that. There was not one individual nurse could go to the drug cupboard and look at the prescription and just decide off her own back what was the appropriate - so there had to be two nurses as far as controlled drugs were concerned.

H Q Again, would that way of operating be in the patient's best interests?

A In terms of relieving a patient's pain and distress yes, I think it would be,

A given that there was not a doctor immediately available on site.

Q Are there any situations where you think it may not be in the patient's best interests?

A I cannot.

B THE CHAIRMAN: You are looking a little tired. Would you like to take a break now before we continue?

THE WITNESS: No, I am fine, thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are quite sure about that?

THE WITNESS: Yes, thank you.

C THE CHAIRMAN: If at any time you do feel it is all getting a bit much and you need a few minutes to get yourself together, please just say so. This is your testimony and we will take it at your pace.

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

D THE CHAIRMAN: I am going to pass you now to Dr Roger Smith, who is a medical member of the Panel.

DR SMITH: Can I just take you back briefly to the same case that both of my colleagues opposite each other talked about, and this is Mrs Spurgin, that is Patient I?

A Yes.

E Q The first question to a geriatrician is this: does age in itself matter?

A No. It should not be a barrier to receiving treatment if treatment is deemed to be appropriate.

Q Aunty Enid, said a witness, was a very independent old lady of 92 who drove her car until she was 90, and this poor old lady was pulled over walking her dog.

F A Yes.

Q Fractured her neck of femur. It is an important context. Do you agree?

A I did.

Q Let me then go, just leaving that aside, to the issue that you raised in your note. You were clearly concerned that there might be an orthopaedic problem.

G A Yes.

Q Both before she left Haslar ...

A Yes.

Q ... and later when you saw her, I do not know, about a week after she came into Dryad.

H A Yes.

A Q You noted shortening.
A Yes.

Q I think I heard you say to Mrs Mansell that you thought this was due to deep-seated infection?

A Yes.

B Q About which you would be very pessimistic in terms of outcome?
A Yes.

Q But could there be another explanation of shortening? What would a junior doctor think if you said, "Shortening of the leg, doctor, what do you think?"

A The other diagnostic possibilities would be dislocation of a hip. That could produce shortening.

C Q For the lay members, is that something that is remediable?

A Yes, it is, but I think it is unlikely in this clinical context, because usually when a hip is dislocated and there is a sudden increase in pain and not the gradual increase in pain which seems to have happened. Also this lady had been seen, I think, by the physiotherapist who did not report any concern with the hip, and physiotherapists are often quite good at picking up orthopaedic problems. The other possibility is that her femoral head had collapsed as a result, because just osteoporotic and soft and metal work, and, again, that presents a major challenge from an orthopaedic perspective to sort that.

D Q Indeed, the orthopaedic surgeon who independently gave us his witness on that said that there was a chance in osteoporotic old people that the metal work might come apart.

A Yes.

E Q Is that potentially remediable?

A My understanding is that when you have metal work in place it is extremely difficult to eradicate infection and that the only chance of getting that infection to resolve is actually to remove the metal work.

F Q What we seem to be agreed about is that when there is shortening there are different possibilities and there is, perhaps, some potential for treatment?

A Yes.

Q You say that was not going through your mind, that you were being pessimistic, not optimistic, I think you said to Mr Payne?

A Yes.

G Q So Auntie Enid, who was very independent, pulled over by a dog, might she not have had the chance of an orthopaedic opinion?

A As I said, when I requested the x-ray that was at the back of my mind, because the first thing an orthopaedic surgeon would ask is, "Have you x-rayed the hip", but I would still come back to my view that even though this was an independent fit lady beforehand, her prognosis at this stage when I saw her on the 7th I think was looking distinctly guarded.

H Q That is to say the least, is it not, but is that not because nothing has been

A done? I am sorry, I am probably repeating on what my colleagues have said, but is that not because nothing has been done?

A Having seen such patients in the past, my experience is my patients do extremely badly.

B Q We will leave it there. Just going back to the general situation. You came to Dryad and there was you and there was Sister Hamlin and her staff and there was Dr Barton, the clinical assistant, daily, Monday to Friday. I think you mentioned a senior registrar?

A Yes, Dr Ravindrane occasionally.

Q So there was a registrar on occasion. So if Dr Barton needed advice, on a day-to-day basis if she needed someone to refer to with a problem, would she go to you?

C A Yes.

Q There would not be another way she could go to your registrar, for instance?

A No, that would be unlikely.

Q How available were you?

D A I may not always have been immediately available but Dr Barton would be able, if she was not able to contact me directly, to leave a message with my secretary and I would try to get back to her.

Q So there was a contact point that could easily be used?

A Yes.

Q Forgive me for asking this question: were you amenable to being contacted?

E A Well, I would like to think so.

Q Glad to be contacted?

A Yes.

Q Would the staff have known that?

A I think so, yes.

F Q Did they ever?

A I think I remember a couple of occasions. Well, I certainly remember being down seeing relatives of an evening at the request of staff, either Dr Barton or the nursing staff. I think I recollect being there on a weekend once when I was not on call to sort out a problem. So I would like to think that - I think it is really important that consultants are available.

G Q Thank you very much for that. Let us think about Patient J, Mr Packman. Mr Packman was this very obese gentleman who came from - I have forgotten now. I think it was the QA?

A Queen Alexandra Hospital, yes.

Q He came for a chance at remobilisation.

A Yes.

H Q I think there was somebody, it might have been you, who said there was a

- A good assessment on the day of admission and that was by Dr Ravindrane?
 A I am not sure. I do not think it was me that said it, but there was a good assessment by Dr Ravindrane.
- Q That was the kind of note you would expect a hospital doctor to make?
 A Yes.
- B Q He started this gentleman on Clexane.
 A I would have to ---
- Q Okay. We will take our time on that one. It should be page 55, I think, in J.
 A I am sorry.
- Q It is 55. It has "54" in bold.
 C A Yes. I am just trying to find the reference to Clexane. I have the prescription sheet on page 173.
- DR SMITH: Good.
- MR KARK: Clexane is mentioned on page 172.
- D DR SMITH: Page 172. (To the witness) I do not recognise that as Dr Barton's writing.
 A No, I think that is Dr Ravindrane's signature.
- Q I think we established that earlier. So he started Mr Packman on Clexane. Would it be a reasonable assumption then that starting him on Clexane, which is to prevent problems ...
 A Yes.
- E Q ... firmly does not put this gentleman in the end of life category at this stage?
 A Yes, that is fair comment.
- Q So he is still for mobilisation, if it is possible.
 A If it is possible, yes.
- F Q Then the next day he has, "Fresh blood [per rectum]".
 A Yes.
- Q As a physician, what would you take that to mean?
 A He was having bleeding from his gastrointestinal tract. Probably the lower part of the gastrointestinal tract. Is that what you?
- G Q Fresh red blood could come from the lower. Could it come from the upper GI tract?
 A If it was a very profuse bleed my understanding is it could, but I think that is unlikely.
- Q But it could?
 A I would prefer to defer to a gastroenterologist on that particular question.
- H Q I am asking you as a general physician geriatrician.

- A A I think someone would have to be having a very severe gastric bleed before that would happen.
- Q It could be a severe GI bleed?
- A My feeling is ---
- B Q Put it at that level. It could be?
- A It could be.
- Q What would you expect a nurse to do if she saw that in the bed? If it was in your ward in QA, what would you expect a nurse to do?
- A Call the doctor.
- Q Why?
- C A Because gastrointestinal bleeding is a serious condition.
- Q What do you expect the doctor to do?
- A Make a judgment about what treatment is felt - well, to examine the patient and make a judgment as to what treatment is felt to be appropriate.
- Q The doctor having thought it was a GI bleed of some significance, what would you expect that doctor to do before he then left that patient?
- D A I think it depends on the individual patient, but in normal circumstances one would expect someone to check a blood count, check pulse, blood pressure, et cetera, and ask, perhaps, for blood to be cross-matched.
- Q Would it be unreasonable to expect a junior doctor to put up a drip?
- A Oh yes, yes.
- E Q It would not be unreasonable?
- A It would not be unreasonable.
- Q What would you expect a houseman then to do? Sorry - we call them something else now. FI, or something, is it not?
- A Much the same. Much the same.
- F Q Yes. But what else would you expect them to do?
- A Call a senior.
- Q Yes. Why?
- A Because that would represent a significant change in someone's condition which they might potentially not be able to deal with on their own.
- G Q It is a serious situation? A potentially serious situation?
- A Yes.
- Q This did not happen?
- A No.
- H Q That is not good.

- A A I think that in this situation what one has to look at is what was this patient's prognosis, outcome, what was wrong with them, and this man clearly had very significant medical problems in that he was immobile. It was unlikely that he would ever regain his mobility. He had extensive pressure sores in his sacrum and the back of his legs. This man was never in my view going to get out of a bed. He is never going to mobilise again, and I think his life expectancy was extremely poor. In that context ---
- B Q Wait a moment. He had been sent because there was some potential for mobilisation?
A I would disagree with that, fundamentally.
- Q Okay.
A As I say, he had no prospect of rehabilitation.
- C Q Let us backtrack a moment. Let us stick to where we were going, in a ward in the QA. If a man had an acute bleed, a sixty-something year old man had an acute bleed and he was in for something else, is there some potential for assessment at a reasonable risk?
A I think what we are coming down to is, what is this man's prognosis ---
- Q No, no. You said that. But is there some potential ---
A Yes. There is potential for assessment ---
- D Q At a reasonable risk?
A There is potential to intervene.
- Q And if he was in the QA might he have had an endoscopy?
A He might have had.
- E Q If he had not, if he had not had an endoscopy in the QA under your care, what would be written in the notes?
A Just ask me again.
- Q See if I can put it a different way. If somebody had decided – if you had decided – that this man, who is not in Dryad, is in the QA, and you see him on your ward round the next day?
F A Yes.
- Q If you decided that he was not for endoscopy ---
A Yes.
- Q --- what would you have done?
A I would have written in the notes.
- G Q How much would you have written?
A I would have written the reasons why I thought that he should not be for endoscopy.
- Q Why would you have written why he should not?
A So that other people who followed on would see that and would know that that was the plan of care.
- H

A Q You would be very careful to write down the reasons, because it is a big decision, is it not?

A Yes.

Q Apart from covering your own back, there are many other ramifications?

A It is a big decision.

B Q And that did not happen either?

A No.

Q So I am still left with that same problem. Why is a 67-year old man, although he has multiple problems, why is he not given the chance of a reasonably easy investigation and, through that investigation, therapeutic endoscopy to tie off a blood vessel, to put adrenalin round a blood vessel that is bleeding?

C A Because I think the important thing is, "What is this man's prognosis" and in the light of the events that are happening to this gentleman, how appropriate or otherwise is it to intervene.

Q But you are not there?

A No.

D Q Somebody else is there?

A Yes.

Q Somebody else is making those decisions?

A Yes.

E Q On an intercurrent event?

A Yes.

Q In the progress of this man of 60-something?

A Yes.

F Q Do you not think it might have been reasonable for somebody to telephone you and say, "What should we do here"?

A I had confidence in Dr Barton and her decision making.

Q So you are happy that your patient did not get the chance?

A In the nursing record, and speaking to the nursing staff ---

Q Are you content with that not being in the record? Are you content that your patient did not get the chance?

G A Yes, in this situation I am.

Q Are you content that the decision – a major decision – that you would have written in the notes if it was in the QA was not taken to you?

A Yes. Dr Barton was a very experienced doctor and she had been in that role for eleven years.

H Q I am sorry, in what role?

A A In her clinical assistant.

Q In what kind of a ward?

A Rehabilitation and continuing care ward. She was also an experienced GP.

Q On a what kind of ward?

A Continuing care.

B

Q Continuing care ward?

A Yes.

Q That was changing?

A That was changing. She was also a very experienced GP. She could have encountered this problem in her general practice.

C

Q Okay. I am going to move to a totally different area very briefly. That touches upon that last interchange we had there. Patients were now coming. The situation was changing. This continuing care ward was becoming a place to which patients were sent by orthopaedic surgeons post-op and by others for some... We know that the chance of mobilisation was not good because the staff were not there to do it. There were no physios and so on.

A Yes.

D

Q But that was what was happening?

A Yes.

Q Do you think it is possible that such patients, that this team was not used to dealing with, might have been reclassified in their minds into continuing care patients and not given the management that was meant for them?

E

A When my colleagues and I saw patients on the acute wards, potentially to be transferred to our wards, we would in general write the diagnosis, what the prognosis would be and a management plan.

Q "We" being?

A The consultants. Sorry; if I was asked to see someone, have a word, and my colleagues were asked to see someone on the orthopaedic wards in Queen Alexandra Hospital, there was always a letter written to the patient's general practitioner after every such ward consultation.

F

Q So they did not get to Dryad except through your hands?

A That is right. So when we started with the bed pressures and there were fewer continuing care patients, what happened was, if you like, the waiting list for Dryad Ward would evaporate at times, but there would still be a waiting list of patients for transfer to Daedalus Ward. What would happen is that one of the secretaries who maintained the waiting list would then take the names of the top two or three patients out of the waiting list, board, along with an accompanying letter, speak to a consultant who was available in the offices, and say, "We have an empty bed in Dryad Ward. There are these patients here who are on the waiting list for Daedalus. Do you think they might be suitable for transfer to Dryad Ward given the circumstances that exist?" And so, if I were there, I would look through that and try and identify the most suitable, in other words, the patient who was not like to need intensive rehabilitation.

H

A

Q Yes. But nevertheless, you and your colleagues have formulated a plan by writing something down before the transfer?

A Yes.

Q And that might be, as we have seen, to give them a chance for remobilisation, and so on?

B

A Yes.

Q But we have not seen in the cases that we have dealt with today “for continuing care”?

A No.

Q So I come back to that. Do you think that the nursing staff, or the team in general in Dryad, might perhaps have taken a more pessimistic view, despite what you have written?

C

A They could have done. But to me, I think the staff in Dryad Ward were aware of the pressures, and certainly Sister Hamblin did speak to me about the pressures on the ward, and I made it clear that what we were trying to do was transfer the most suitable patients, and the reasons for them being transferred. Then a letter from me and my colleagues would always or should have accompanied the patient.

Q Were you aware at any time that some of your nursing staff had used the word “dumping” when talking about such patients?

D

A I was not specifically aware, but in the context of Dryad Ward, certainly often ... I think what would sometimes happen is that between the time of assessment and transfer to Dryad Ward, which might be up to three weeks sometimes, a patient’s condition could have changed and we were left with a problem that was not that which was in the referral letter.

Q I think we all understand that, but the pejorative word “dumping” has connotations, does it not? About the way people think about the patients coming to you?

E

A You mean in the sense that if people feel they have been dumped, they might not want to behave as they should do? I am not quite clear what you are suggesting.

Q Let me turn your question back to you. What do you think?

F

THE LEGAL ASSESSOR: Could I just intervene here? If the witness is not aware of the word “dumping” being used, my advice is, it is pointless to ask him what it means. His view to what it means is no different from anybody else.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, I think that must be right. If the position, doctor, is that you were not aware of nurses using the word “dumping” or “dumped” in relation to patients who were incoming onto the ward, then there is really no value in exploring that particular point further with you, so we will desist.

G

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

DR SMITH: Then finally, and again very briefly, touching on opiates. You said that you are not an expert?

A No.

H

A Q And that Dr Barton and the nursing staff were much more experienced in the practical use of drivers and diamorphine?

A Yes.

Q With sedatives. But it would not be unreasonable to say, would it, that opiates such as Oramorph and MST are pretty much ordinary drugs to most physicians?

A Yes.

B

Q And we have been looking at some of the doses, and I think that you were fairly happy with the doses of Oramorph, for instance, that were being used?

A In particular situations.

Q I think that you said that in 1999 you were not aware of the existence of any guidelines or protocols for the use of opiates or sedatives in the unit?

C

A That is right.

Q But that there was the *BNF* if you needed a reference?

A Yes.

Q I am just wondering if you are aware of what the *BNF* says about opiates in the elderly?

D

A I have certainly read it in the past and at various times in the past when I felt it has been appropriate to do so.

Q Can you tell us what your understanding of that is, or rather what your understanding in 1999 was?

A I could not tell you what the *BNF* said in 1999 about prescribing opiates in the elderly, but in general the theme was exercising more caution in elderly patients.

E

Q Would it surprise you to see that it says that in the elderly, perhaps you should start at 50 per cent of the dose in another adult?

A That does not surprise me.

Q That does not surprise you?

A No.

F

DR SMITH: Thank you very much, Dr Reid.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, doctor. I am very conscious of the fact you have been on the stand now for one hour and twenty minutes. Would you like to take a break before you move on to questions from myself?

A I feel fine, thank you.

G

THE CHAIRMAN: I am encouraged to hear that you feel fine. There are, I think, at least one or two persons in the room who would appreciate at least a comfort break. I am going to say five minutes for a comfort break. Then we will resume, please.

(The Panel adjourned for a short time)

H

A THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back. Doctor, the good news is you really are coming towards the end now, and I am the last member of the Panel. I am afraid I am a lay member too, with all the difficulties that that throws up. What I am going to attempt to do is to pull together the picture that I think you have been presenting in the course of your evidence.

B I should start by saying, I absolutely understand that at the time that you went onto Dryad in 1999 the situation was in a state of flux, and clearly from what you have told us there were a number of elements that were far from satisfactory. It was very much a matter of all parties doing the best they could in the circumstances they were faced with, and with the resources that were available to them. I understand that. What I want to do is to make sure that I have understood clearly exactly what that means in terms of what the situation was. We start off with the fact that it was a ward that was going through change. I think you told us yesterday that it had been effectively a continuing care ward, and you said that at that time that meant not so much strain on the medical staff, but considerable strain on the nursing staff.

C I think you said that the change that came, bringing on to the ward persons who were not simply for continuing care, but for whom additional elements of care were required, such as various therapies, I think you said that the significance of that was that it actually increased the strain and pressure on the nursing staff who were required to do even more than had already been the case?

A Yes.

D Q In those circumstances we had a consultant, yourself, who was coming onto the ward once a week to do a full ward round, and I am not sure whether you said you would see every patient or only those that you were asked to see?

A No. I saw every patient.

E Q Every patient. So we have a situation where there is a consultant coming on once a week for a ward round. We have a clinical assistant, a GP from a local practice, who is coming in Monday to Friday, every day, and we have heard certainly in the mornings, very often in the afternoons and even in the evenings as well, in your view going above and beyond what you might expect for one individual?

A Yes.

F Q And you have nursing staff. You have told us candidly that you were not aware of all of the training that they would have had, in particular with regard to the use of syringe drivers?

A That is correct.

G Q But you were confident that not only did you have a first class doctor on the ward, but you also had good and experienced nursing staff?

A Yes.

H Q Your view was that the doctor and, to some extent even, the nursing staff had more experience of some of the areas of activity that would be required on this ward than you had hitherto had?

A Yes.

H Q You have also candidly accept that notwithstanding that, you were the consultant and to that extent you ultimately were responsible for what went on on that ward?

- A .A Yes.
- Q Part of your duty of care was to ensure that on your weekly ward rounds you properly inspected the notes. That would be the clinical notes?
- A Yes.
- B Q And the nursing notes?
- A No, I would not normally look at the nursing notes.
- Q You would not normally look at the nursing notes?
- A Because there is usually a member of the nursing staff on hand who is able to tell me what was happening. There might be occasions when I did have to conduct a ward round for a short period on my own and I might then look at the records if the nurse was not available.
- C Q So there you were, with a doctor in whom you had great confidence and, so far as you were aware, a doctor in whom all the nursing staff also had great confidence.
- A Yes.
- Q You have told us that they were fulsome in their praise of this doctor.
- A Yes.
- D Q You have also helped us to understand the system that had developed on this ward to cope with the particular pressures that the ward faced.
- A Yes.
- Q You have told us that this was a ward where the clinical assistant would write up variable doses on some prescriptions.
- A Yes.
- E Q You explained the rationale behind that. In broad terms, you were happy with that.
- A Yes.
- Q We were shown exhibit D4, which was, you may recall, the memorandum dated 27 October 1999 headed "Learning Points from the Wilson Complaint".
- A Yes.
- F Q This of course was a document that would have been produced at a time when all of the patients with whom we are concerned in this case, with the exception I think of Patient K, Elsie Devine, were actually dead.
- A Yes.
- G Q As it happens, the document refers to what was called "an agreed protocol" that you tell us at the time you were not aware of.
- A I was not aware of any protocol.
- Q But that document tells us that there was an agreed protocol that specifically allowed Dr Barton to write up diamorphine for a syringe driver with doses ranging between 20 and 200 mg a day.
- A Yes.
- H

A Q You have told us there may be some potential for misunderstanding within that phrase, but be that as it may, so far as you were concerned, (a) you did not know that there was such an agreement.

A That is correct.

B Q And (b) you had, until it was pointed out to you some years later, no recollection of ever having seen doses of that large a range.

A That is correct.

Q It was pointed out to you by Mr Langdale yesterday that these kinds of ranges were not limited to the one example that had been brought to your attention some years ago.

A That is correct.

C Q In fact, there were many.

A There were three I think in total.

Q That is something we can refer to the records on in due course. Your understanding at the moment is that there were three of those?

A Yes.

D Q None of those you recollect having seen?

A That is correct.

Q Although you accept that you must have seen them?

A I accept that I must have seen two of them.

E Q But it did not necessarily register in your mind at the time that this was rather a wide range?

A That is correct. I do not recollect that wide range. What I was saying was, the third one, when I was explaining the blue fold-over drug chart, I accept it was my responsibility to look at the reverse side, but because the patient was not on a syringe driver, I may well not have looked at that chart.

F Q What is clear about the agreed protocol that is referred to in this document is that it only extends to the issue of the variable dose. It says nothing about the sort of circumstances alluded to by Ms Julien where you have the doctor writing up a prescription for the mixture of opiates to be delivered by syringe driver without a start date being recorded on the prescription.

A Did you say that it does not record a start date?

Q The document says nothing about a start date.

A No, it does not.

G Q So far as you were aware, whenever a syringe driver with this mixture of opiates was prescribed, there would always have been a start date recorded in the note of the prescription.

A Yes.

H Q If there had not been and you had seen it, that is something that would have excited comment from you?

A A That would usually be something that would be picked up by the nursing staff, because nursing staff are not allowed to administer against a prescription that has not been signed and dated, with the exception of verbal orders, for which there is a separate policy.

Q But of course in the event that ---

B MR LANGDALE: Sir, I am sorry to interrupt, but it should be made clear to the witness that these were signed and dated. There was not a signed date, but a signed and dated prescription.

C THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for pointing that out. (To the witness) As Mr Langdale has said, we are not talking about a prescription that is not dated in terms of when it has been written, but rather, an open-dated prescription. If I can put it in this way to you. It is very crude language, as you might expect from a layman. We have been given to understand from a number of witnesses now that the process of being on a syringe driver with the sort of mixtures of opiates that we have been talking about is in effect a one-way street, end of life regime, that will not go on for very long. Once you have started, in effect, within the context of this ward, there was no going back; it was death.

A I think that would often be the case, if one was clear that someone's symptoms were for palliation.

D Q Can you recall a single instance in your year on Dryad Ward where a patient was put on to a mix of opiates on syringe driver who did not die?

A No, I cannot.

Q So on the one hand we all understand and agree that that is the end game. When you start on that, that is death. But that is an action. Somebody has to start you on that particular road.

E A Yes.

Q Before you get to there, somebody in effect has to sign the death warrant, somebody has to prescribe that.

A Someone has to make a decision that this patient is for palliation.

F Q And they are going to indicate that, in terms of the syringe driver, by prescribing the syringe driver with the opiates.

A In the first instance, one would expect that to be recorded in the medical notes, that someone's symptoms was for palliation.

Q But even if they did not use some of the words we have heard and I know you have agreed with today: "Make comfortable", "TLC" and so on, these are all euphemisms for a change of status to palliative care, end of life, the patient is going to die.

G A Yes.

Q One of the ways in which we can see that decision illustrated is when a patient is actually prescribed that mixture of drugs to be delivered in that manner, but there are two stages to the process. There is the writing-up of the prescription and then there is the administration of the prescription.

H A Yes.

A Q You have been asked about the dangers and the risks that are attendant upon a situation where the prescription is written out, but where no start date is indicated on the prescription.

A Yes.

B Q Do you accept that the principal risk there is that, for whatever reason, a patient might be administered at an earlier stage than would be appropriate?

A Yes.

Q That must be the risk. So the situation that we have on this ward is that you have nursing staff who ultimately are going to be the persons who will in effect press the button, set up the syringe driver and administer the prescription from which there is no return.

A Yes.

C Q We have heard evidence that under the system that developed – and clearly it developed long before you had come on to the ward and was in place when you arrived – it was possible for nursing staff of their own volition to decide, “Now the time has come. We will administer the syringe driver and the drugs therein and therefore ultimately end the life of this patient.”

A Can you just repeat that for me?

D Q You came into the ward at a time when this structure was in place.

A Yes.

Q The structure was one which enabled nursing staff, not qualified doctors, nursing staff of their own volition, without a doctor telling them, “Do this now”, to administer the syringe driver and the mixture of opiates therein.

E A I would have expected the nursing staff to have contacted the doctor, but in the event that a patient was in distress and a doctor was immediately available, in that situation, that is the situation I would have envisaged, not it happening as a routine without consultation with Dr Code A.

Q Do you see the risk that is attendant in a ward where we know nursing staff are under great pressure? Do you see the risk in such a situation for putting into the discretion of the nursing staff as to when administration should happen?

F THE LEGAL ASSESSOR: Chairman, may I interrupt here? It is simply to advise the Panel that a warning should be given in relation to self-incrimination. This specific line of questioning, it seems to me, raises the question of a link between the action or inaction of Dr Code A, the consultant on the ward, and the fatal outcome for the patients. The reason I mention it is that a suggestion has been made that the nurses were effectively put in charge, were given a discretion.

G I advise at this stage that Dr Reid should be warned that he is entitled to claim privilege against self-incrimination in respect of any evidence he gives which might be relied upon in a criminal prosecution either to decide to prosecute or to establish his guilt.

H In other words, in less legal words, if Dr Reid is asked questions which are directed towards or are clearly relevant to his possible guilt of a criminal charge, he should be told that he is not obliged to answer that question. I advise that we have now reached that point and he

A should be warned that he need not respond to any question, not just this specific question, if the answer may tend clearly to incriminate him.

I do emphasise that my intervention is made simply because of the line of questioning being pursued. It implies no view on my part whatsoever as to Dr Reid's culpability or otherwise and neither does it imply any criticism of the line of the Panel's questioning.

B THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Legal Assessor. I of course fully accept the advice. I want to check to see that the doctor understands the advice that I have just been given by the Legal Assessor.

THE WITNESS: That I would not wish to answer these questions without having ---

C THE CHAIRMAN: Let me say a little bit further. First of all, this is not the first time that this warning has been given in this case and it may not be the last time, but it is absolutely the right of any individual who comes before us not to answer any questions which they feel might in the answering put them in a position where they themselves could find themselves answerable in a criminal court. As the Legal Assessor says, because the line of questioning could have that effect, it does not mean that it is delivered in an attempt to point a finger, but it is absolutely your right, and you should be aware of it, that you do not need to answer any question which you feel could in the answering put you in a position where you could be brought before a court of criminal law.

D THE WITNESS: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will continue with such questions as I have, on the understanding that at any time, if there is any question you do not want to answer, you simply say, "I do not wish to answer that" and it will not go on.

E The point that I had reached was that at the time you came into this ward, there was already existing a situation in which nursing staff were able of their own volition to determine when to administer the syringe driver with the opiates on board, where, and only where, the prescription itself was open in terms of start date. That was the situation when you arrived.

A Yes.

F Q Was that a situation that you were aware of?

A That the staff could start it at any time?

Q If they had a prescription which did not have a start date.

A My view, as I said before, is that I would have expected them to have consulted Dr Barton before taking that step.

G Q I understand that, but the question was directed to your state of knowledge only. At the time that you came on to the ward, did you know, were you aware that in the circumstances outlined, they could of their own volition start the syringe driver?

A I am not really sure that I was aware of that.

Q Is the first that you have heard of this during the course of this hearing, or have you heard of this at an earlier stage?

H A I just do not know.

A Q Very well. You cannot be expected to remember everything. Even sometimes very significant points can go by the board. You have told us, however, that you had great confidence in both Dr Barton and indeed the nursing staff.

A Yes.

B Q You were asked some questions by Mr Kark about whether that confidence in Dr Barton and the nursing staff was shared by all members of the nursing staff.

A As far as I am aware, it was.

Q We have seen – you have not up to this point – another defence document that has been put in. I am referring to exhibits D1 and D2. There was in fact in 1999 and 2000 a difficulty involving one particular nurse, Nurse Hallman, concerning problems that she had with Nurse Hamblin and Dr Barton. Are you aware of that, or were you aware at the time?

C A I think I can remember Nurse Hallman.

Q She was complaining that she was being harassed by Nurse Hamblin and Dr Barton.

A I think, now you have mentioned it, I was aware of that, but I am not sure I was aware of any details surrounding that.

D Q Were you aware that one of the areas of difficulty, if I can put it neutrally, between the three parties was the prescribing of opiates, in particular in relation to syringe drivers?

A I do not think that I was aware of that.

Q We will put that into the camp of something that you were not aware of at the time that you were on this ward.

A I do not think so.

E Q Very well. So the picture we have is that whilst you had great confidence in the doctor and the nursing staff, your belief was that the nursing staff, because of the fulsome praise that had been communicated to you by at least some, was indeed unanimous.

A My recollection was of all of the nursing staff being full of praise for Dr Barton.

F Q Going on to things that you were or were not aware of at the time that you were on the ward, we have also been shown, and I think you have seen, exhibit D5 which was headed, "PROTOCOL FOR PRESCRIPTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF DIAMORPHINE BY SUBCUTANEOUS INFUSION". That document, in fact, was written by yourself.

A Yes.

Q It was written in December of 1999.

A Yes.

G Q By which time all of the patients with whom we are currently concerned were dead.

A Yes.

Q It is also the draft of a protocol but that draft was never brought into being. It was changed.

H A That is correct.

A Q The reason it was changed was because a number of the points contained within it, namely those which dealt with the upward progression of doses, was, in fact, ill-conceived.

A Yes.

Q Wrong.

A Yes.

B Q That was information that while being wrong does accurately reflect what you understood to be the medical clinical position at the time?

A Can you just repeat that again?

Q Yes. Although you have accepted that there were elements within your draft that are wrong, it is your evidence, is it, that you nonetheless at the time believed them to be right?

C A With a caveat that in terms of the doubling up of dose, my experience had been that was much lower doses than are in that document, so this document was used as, if you like, a starter for ten for other people to comment on.

Q One of the reasons why you did not object when you saw on the prescription notes, one of the reasons why you did not object to these rapid successions of doubling up was because you actually believed that that was the correct and appropriate way to act?

D A That is correct.

Q But you were wrong.

A I was wrong.

E Q Had you referred to the current *British National Formulary*, current at that time, at the time you were on the ward, you would have known that?

A I would have to go back to the *British National Formulary* and look.

Q You will recall that, very briefly, Dr Smith ran through the list of areas that were covered at the time within the *British National Formulary*.

A I am sorry. Could you repeat that?

F Q You are aware that when Dr Smith was asking questions of you he did take you, albeit quite fast, through the main subject areas that were covered by the *British National Formulary* in terms of dosage for opiates.

A Yes.

G Q Very well. It is just a matter of establishing that clear picture of what you did know and what you did not know. So far as this is concerned, what you knew turns out in some cases to have been ill conceived but does explain why you might not have questioned the doctor or nursing staff when you saw examples of that wrong action.

A Yes.

H Q Because you too took the view that it was correct and appropriate. We have looked at some length at the case of Patient I, the unfortunate Mrs Spurgin. I think you said that the odds were stacked against a good recovery for this poor lady?

A That was my view at the time.

A Q Yes. The timing is quite important there because, of course, that phrase might apply at different stages in her progression through the system, but what we have clearly established, I believe, is, first of all, that you had written up a note on 7 April indicating that you wanted this patient to be x-rayed?

A Yes.

B Q We have heard already from another consultant that when a consultant says that something should be done in terms of action to be taken forward, this is not a suggestion or a request. The consultant told us that she expected that it would be done.

A Yes.

C Q Is that the same with you, the way you operate?

A Yes.

Q This was not a fanciful suggestion, this was an order.

A Yes.

Q So far as we are able to tell now, looking at the documents that are before us, it was an order that was not followed?

A Yes.

D Q You gave the order on 7 April. We have already heard that within these clinical notes there was no further entry until 12 April and that entry was made by yourself?

A Yes.

E Q You came back, you presumably looked at the clinical notes and saw what you had previously ordered?

A Yes.

Q You quickly realised that nothing had been done about it?

A Yes.

F Q Did you cause enquiries to be made at that point as to how it was that an instruction given by yourself had not been carried out?

A No, I do not remember enquiring.

Q If you had enquired, would it be reasonable to assume that whatever you had learned you would have noted on the clinical notes?

A Yes.

G Q May we take it then that by the total absence of any information there you may not have enquired at all?

A It is certainly possible.

H Q I have looked at the note that you have made and I wonder if you can help me. It almost appears to me as if it may have been made into stages in terms of time, because the first part of it reads, "Now [very] drowsy", and we know, of course, that by this stage the poor lady was already on the syringe driver, she had been put on to that the day before, and so was on that final journey, but when you

- A wrote, "Now [very] drowsy", that would imply to me that, although sleepy, the patient was still conscious. You should have a look at it. It is on page 27 of bundle I.
- A Yes.
- Q Where you have written, "Now [very] drowsy", would it be reasonable for me to assume that by that you meant the patient was conscious?
- B A Yes, they would still be responding in some way.
- Q Yes. The reason I ask is because you deal with that point and you indicate that there should be the reduction in the diamorphine. Presumably, to make her able to be more responsive. I think you told us you felt it was clear from your examination that she was over-sedated?
- A Yes.
- C Q We then have the next paragraph, as it were, "Able to move hips without pain", which is clear enough, "but [patient] not rousable!", with an exclamation mark.
- Q What did you mean by that and what is the significance of the exclamation mark?
- D A I think it meant that she had been over-sedated.
- Q If the patient was not rousable, would that be an indication that at the time you wrote that she was unconscious, or, merely, you could not get her out of the state of drowsiness to get any sensible response?
- A I cannot say.
- E Q No. Unfortunately, neither can I, which is why I was asking for help, because on the face of it it appears to me that there may have been a gap in time between the writing of the first and the second.
- A I would not have thought so.
- Q Very well. The purpose of the exclamation mark was really to make the point then that you may have cured the pain, but if the patient is non-rousable then they are clearly over-sedated?
- F A Yes.
- Q You have told us what the danger of over-sedation is.
- A Yes.
- Q That it can depress the respiratory system to the point that the patient stops breathing altogether and dies.
- G A Yes.
- Q That is why you reduced that dose?
- A Yes.
- Q Here is an example where you do note a prescription level, you do apply your oversight as a consultant to look at that, question it and say that is not appropriate, it is causing this patient to be over-sedated, and you give an order that that be reduced.
- H

A A Yes.

Q We heard that, unfortunately, one of the nurses, and she was named, Nurse Barrett, unfortunately, for whatever reason, and it was made very clear to us by Mr Langdale that we have no information as to what that reason might have been, but the fact is that that nurse, when she made up the replacement syringe driver, whilst following your instruction to reduce the dose of diamorphine, for one reason or another, doubled the dose of - I am sorry, you will have to read it for me.

B A Midazolam.

Q Yes, midazolam, and I think you told us that that astonished you?
A Yes.

Q Because the consequence of that increase in dose did what?
A It could lead to further over-sedation.

Q With the potential consequence of?
A Respiratory depression and death.

Q Indeed, we see that the very next entry in the clinical notes refers to the very next day, early in the morning, in fact, at 1.15, the patient in fact died?
A Yes.

Q You told us that part of the rationale here was pain and you certainly, on 7 April, have noted pain. You recorded, "Still in a lot of pain".
A Yes.

Q There are no other clinical entries before your own on 12 April where you have indicated fairly clearly, in that final paragraph I referred you to, "Able to move hips without pain". So, presumably, that was you manipulating the hips?
A Yes.

Q I think you told us in extreme circumstances, where a patient is unrousable, you would do something that would trigger the pain mechanism to see whether the patient was capable of experiencing pain.
A Yes.

Q You moved that patient's hitherto painful hips without response.
A Yes.

Q You said that you did not routinely read the nursing notes. Had you done so, would it surprise you to learn that on 11 April, that is, the day when the instruction was given by Dr Barton to commence syringe driver, that the nurse on duty ---

G MR LANGDALE: Sir, I am sorry to interrupt. I do not think that is right. The syringe driver was commenced on the morning of 12 April at eight o'clock, or nine o'clock.

H THE CHAIRMAN: I think I said when the instruction was given and the notes, if you would like to refer to page 134, would indicate that the instruction was given on 11 April.

A MR JENKINS: No, we dealt with this.

MR LANGDALE: This is Nurse Hallman. I think that is first thing on the Monday morning is what she said. Nurse Hallman gave evidence about, "[seen by] Dr Barton to commence syringe driver", and she said that, in her view, was given on the morning of the 12th, and if you look at the administration of it, it was indeed on the morning.

B THE CHAIRMAN: I am looking at the note on page 134 and the last date entry is 11 April 1999.

MR LANGDALE: Yes.

C THE CHAIRMAN: Are you telling me that that note, down to but not including the final line, is not the note of Nurse Hallman?

MR LANGDALE: That is right. The final line is that she – it is very difficult because there are a couple of squiggles, but the last line is her and her alone, above that it is not her, and she indicated in her evidence that that was, "[seen by] Dr Barton", meant not seen at night but seen on the morning when she, in other words, was going off duty.

D THE CHAIRMAN: Seen on the morning of?

MR LANGDALE: Of Monday the 12th, and she said first thing Monday morning. The drug chart shows that the diamorphine was administered subcutaneously on the morning of the 12th and I think the time is, off the top of my head, eight o'clock.

E MR KARK: It is page 174.

MR LANGDALE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. (To the witness) So far as the nursing note on 11 April is concerned, the nurse had noted there, "Enid denies pain when left alone". It is fair to say went on to write, "but complains when moved at all".

F Does that sound, at that point in time, whenever it was actually written, different to the position on 7 April, "still in a lot of pain"?

A I could not say for sure.

Q Very well. In any event, the next entry in the nursing notes, which, as you have told us, you would not have seen, so you would not have known this anyway, is that, "[seen by] Dr Barton, to commence syringe driver", we know that it was commenced and the next item in the nursing note for also 12 April was seen by yourself and then your instruction to reduce. When we look at the progression of actions over that period, you are coming in on the 12th and saying, "reduce that dose because the patient is over-sedated", that does being reduced but, unhappily and for whatever reason, the midazolam being doubled at the same time, with the same potential consequence of over-sedation which leads to depression of the respiratory system which can therefore lead to death, and we find that the next morning, at 1.15, the patient died peacefully.

H

A You were asked by Mr Kark about the entry in the death certificate and when he asked you, you indicated that you could not see, from what was in front of you at this point, how there could have been a recorded course of death as cerebrovascular accident. Would this be the reality of the situation: this patient died as a result of over-sedation?

A I do not feel qualified to comment on that.

B Q Who would be qualified to comment on that?

A Someone who has experience in clinical pharmacology.

Q So you, as a consultant, you are not a junior doctor who is just starting out, you have been attending deaths on numerous occasions: it is not within your area of expertise?

C A As I remember, the change in the syringe driver was at 15.40 or 16.40. I cannot remember the exact time, and Mrs Spurgin died eight, nine hours later. I would have thought that if it had been the midazolam – the midazolam which had been responsible for it – it would have happened at an earlier stage. But I am not an expert on that.

Q For the backdrop that we have is difficult situations all round; the ward is changing in its focus; there are patients being sent to the ward who do not fit the traditional profile and who require an even higher element of nursing. There is, besides yourself coming in once a week, Dr Barton whom you see, I think you said, at best once a fortnight ---

D A Yes.

Q --- because she was not always able to attend these fortnightly ward round?

A Yes.

E Q A situation in which you give instructions which are not followed? It is a situation ---
A You are talking about the X-ray?

Q For example, yes.

A That is the only example I can think of where something I asked to be done does not appear to have been done.

F Q The only example that you can think of of a time that you have asked for something to be done on that ward and it was not done was that time?

A As far as I can recollect.

Q If we were to look through the notes, just of the few patients that we have before us and look to see what are the things that you have asked to be done, on every occasion we are going to see they were in fact done?

G A Without going through them again, but that is certainly my feeling.

Q You said this was a ward where you had great confidence not only in the doctor, but also in the nursing staff. You have told us that certainly on this occasion you had not given the instruction for the midazolam to be increased, but yet that happened?

A But I do not see how I can be responsible for ----

H

A THE LEGAL ASSESSOR: May I assist here? I think it is important that the witness is asked questions to which he can properly respond. I understand, of course, that the Panel has questions to ask him but there is a danger of matters that in a sense have been recited to the witness and for the witness then to be asked for his comments. My advice to the Panel is that he should be asked relatively open questions which he is able to answer one way or the other.

B THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Legal Assessor. I am almost there in any event. (To the witness) On this ward you have told us about your confidence in the nurses. Were you aware, or are you aware, that there were times when bank staff would be working on the ward, particularly at night?

A I cannot say that I was aware of bank staff being used more on Dryad Ward than any other ward that I happened to come across.

C Q No. And indeed, it is a common feature, sadly, in hospitals up and down the country today and, indeed, at that time, that shortfalls in staffing are routinely made up by the use of bank nurses. What is the disadvantage of bank nurses?

A People whom one does not know, one does not know what experience they have, et cetera.

D Q Yes, indeed. We have heard evidence that it is entirely feasible that on occasions that might be no regular nursing staff on of a night; that it could be that you would have two bank nurses.

A I was not aware of that.

Q Does that affect your view of the degree of risk?

A Oh yes. It has to.

E Q Knowing the things that you do know now, but you did not know then, as well as the things that you clearly did know then, was this ward a safe place for patients to transfer into?

THE LEGAL ASSESSOR: My advice to the Panel, Mr Chairman, is that that is too wide and ambiguous a question to put to this witness. Many people would say that hospitals are inherently unsafe places for one reason or another. No doubt many people would far rather be ill almost anywhere else other than in a hospital. My advice to the Panel is that that is not a question to which this witness can give a sensible, concise and clear reply.

F THE CHAIRMAN: Was it more dangerous than the average ward in the average hospital?

A I would have said I would have been happy for my mother to be admitted to that ward than many other wards that I have had occasion to visit over the years.

G THE CHAIRMAN: That is something for us to ponder on. Thank you very much indeed, Doctor. That completes the questions from the Panel. If you can bear it, I am now going to ask the members of the Bar if they have questions arising out of the Panel questions. Perhaps I could also ask for an indication from each of you as to how long that might be.

MR LANGDALE: I do have questions. 20 minutes, perhaps.

H THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr Kark?

A MR KARK: I would have thought I have slightly less than that, but I certainly do have questions.

B THE CHAIRMAN: Doctor, there are a number of points. You have been on the stand for a very considerable amount of time now, and normally we take the view that a witness should not be asked to remain on the stand without a break for more than an hour at a time, and you have gone well beyond that point. It is also the end of a long day. The indications are that there is a fair amount of questions still to come – something in the region of half an hour to three-quarters of an hour, I would guess.

C We are in your hands, really, here because you know what your commitments are for tomorrow and whether it would be really very difficult for you to come back to us tomorrow or whether it would be less difficult. Could I ask you, would you be available to come first thing tomorrow morning?

C THE WITNESS: I could, but I feel I would prefer to carry on. I will leave it to you, Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Kark?

D MR KARK: I am genuinely slightly concerned for the witness. He has had a very long afternoon. He has been cautioned, which must add to the stress, and sometimes witnesses are very loathe to indicate that they are not up to answering questions. I wholly understand he may rather finish tonight, but if we are going to go on tonight I think he should have a break, if I may say that.

E THE CHAIRMAN: I think that is absolutely right. Mr Langdale, do you have any observations?

E MR LANGDALE: I do not, sir.

F THE CHAIRMAN: We can go one of two ways, Dr Reid. Either we can take a break now and come back at it again a little bit later, or we can stop for today and ask you to come back tomorrow morning. If it would assist, we could no doubt start a little earlier than normal with the intention, therefore, of getting you away earlier. As you know, I have myself on a number of occasions asked you whether you were feeling okay, and I have certainly had the impression on a number of occasions that you were tired. It really is absolutely wrong to press a witness for difficult answers to difficult questions at a time when they are tired.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

G THE CHAIRMAN: I think the Panel are indicating to me a preference for tomorrow morning. Very well. Would it assist you if we were to say nine o'clock or would you be happy with a nine thirty start?

THE WITNESS: I do not have hotel accommodation booked for tonight, so if I am going to go home – I can travel up in the morning.

H MR KARK: May I just indicate that we will obviously speak to the witness, purely about that, but we can certainly arrange accommodation for him very locally if that would help him.

A

THE WITNESS: Can I think about that?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Reflect on that, but the offer is there. We are most grateful, Mr Kark. What I will say at this stage is that we will break now and we will resume at 9.30 tomorrow morning. I am very sorry that we have kept you for so long, and I do hope that you will be away reasonably soon tomorrow. Meanwhile you do remain on oath. That means, therefore, please do not discuss this case with anybody, nor allow anybody to discuss it with you, though there will be representatives of the GMC talking to you in a moment about accommodation should you wish them to arrange it.

B

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

C

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

(The Panel adjourned until Thursday 2 July 2009 at 9.30 a.m.)

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