Other Document Form

Number T366

Title EMAIL DI GROCOTT TO JANIEL REDFERN RE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

(Include source and any document number if relevant)

Receivers instructions urgent action Yes / No

Document registered / indexed as indicated

No(s) of actions raised

Statement readers instructions

Indexed as indicated

No(s) of actions raised

Examined - further action to be taken

Further actions no(s)

When satisfied all action raised Office Manager to endorse other Document Master Number Form.

Code A

O/M	SIO

Indexer

Code A

From: Grocott, David
Sent: 12 January 2006 17:15
To: 'daniel.redfern@lthtr.nhs.uk'; Code A
Cc: Code A
Subject: Assistance in Medical Investigation


Letter Heading Redfearn.doc (7...


Guide for Experts (Medical).do...


Blank expert Report.doc (54 KB...

Mr Redfearn,

Please find attached a formal letter of introduction regarding assistance in this case. As discussed there are also copies of our blank expert report template and guidance for experts that we provide to everyone in the case. D/Supt Williams and myself look forward to meeting with you on Monday 16th at the Lithgow suite at Chorley Hospital at 1715hrs.

In the meantime if I can assist in any way please contact me either by email or by telephone Code A

Regards
Dave Grocott
D/Insp

HAMPSHIRE Constabulary

Chief Constable Paul R. Kernaghan CBE QPM LL.B MA

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Mr Daniel Redfearn
Orthopaedic Dept
Chorley Hospital
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Chorley
PR7 1PP

12 January 2006

Dear Mr. Redfearn,

Operation Rochester

Thank you for taking the time to answer my call and agreeing to address the issues that have been raised regarding potential Orthopaedic problems a particular case. A brief resume of our investigation is as follows.

Operation ROCHESTER is an investigation by Hampshire Police Major Crime Investigation Team into the deaths of a large number of elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. (GWMH) It is alleged that elderly patients who were admitted to the GWMH between 1996 and 1999 for rehabilitative or respite care, were inappropriately administered Diamorphine by use of syringe drivers, resulting in their deaths.

This investigation has been running for some considerable time now and has utilised the skills of a number of medical experts in various fields. One expert has raised some issues relating to the treatment of a particular patient that he feels need to be answered by an Orthopaedic Surgeon. This relates to an elderly lady named Enid Spurgen.

We are seeking an expert in the field of Orthopaedic Surgery who can review the papers and compile a written report in respect of the care of Mrs Spurgen which can be used as evidence in any criminal case should it be necessary. You would be instructed on behalf of the police to assist other experts in identifying whether or not criminal offences may have been committed. Whilst you'll be a single expert giving your own opinions, you may be one of several experts in various fields that are utilised.

A summary of the treatment of the patient Enid Spurgen is attached. In brief I would like you to review the medical records of Mrs Spurgen and hopefully address the following issues. The questions posed are,

1. Can you identify from the records whether or not Mrs Spurgen was suffering from "Code A

Code A

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HAMPSHIRE Constabulary

2. If in your opinion Mrs Spurgen was suffering from this syndrome can you describe what symptoms are displayed, how this condition should be treated or managed and whether it is within the capability of a GP Clinical Assistant to identify this condition?

3. Can you comment on whether or not in your opinion it would have been reasonable to expect a doctor to refer a patient for Orthopaedic review with these symptoms?

4. Code A

5. Code A

The documentation for you to review is as follows,

Medical records BJC/45 Enid Spurgen

I have also enclosed a blank format for the style of report that we are asking all experts to try and follow this is to try and keep some uniformity in the style of report submitted. If you could use the headings that you feel are applicable to your work it would help me.

In addition to compiling a report you will need to keep all notes you make in relation to this case should they be needed to be disclosed in the future in the event of criminal proceedings. These notes are to be made available to the police.

With regards to payment could please confirm in writing what your hourly rate is and indicate how you would like to be paid.

Anything that I can do to assist you further please feel free to contact me on any of the above numbers or my mobil Code A

Yours Sincerely

Dave Grocott
Detective Inspector
Operation Rochester

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OPERATION ROCHESTER

Guidance for Medical Experts

Overview.

Operation ROCHESTER is an investigation by Hampshire Police into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Ten such cases are subject to ongoing investigation. The brief to medical experts in this respect is to examine the medical records and to comment upon the standard of care afforded to those patients in the days leading up to their death. If the care falls below what were then the acceptable standards of the day, the opinion sought would be, how far below the acceptable standards or practice did the care fall?

It may be the case however that the experts determine that the standard of care afforded was acceptable.

Any opinion should be limited to for example, stating that it would have been obvious to the reasonably prudent and skilful doctor in the defendant's position that their actions would hasten or end life.

Whatever the view of the experts, their statements of evidence/reports should be constructed with the following principles in mind:-

1) What treatment should have been proffered in each individual case? Experts should cover in their report the basic conditions of a particular disease and how the symptoms present themselves. They can then go on to describe how the condition would ***normally*** be treated in their own experience, referencing to recognised protocols of the day.

2) When creating reports the experts must bear in mind 'plain speak'. Whilst it is important to be professionally correct, opinions are likely to be challenged by defence experts. Equally reports should be set out in a way that allows for the police/counsel etc to dissect the report and ask for further work or clarification.

3) Experts should have an understanding of the terms Criminal Gross Negligence, and Unlawful Act within the context of Homicide. Language used to describe negligence should be consistent, and if appropriate able to demonstrate why one act is more negligent than another and the level of negligence.

4) When reading the statements of the experts the prosecutor will be looking to apply the criminal standard of proof namely, the evidence to prove any element of the offence must be sufficient to satisfy the jury so that they are sure, or satisfied beyond reasonable doubt. Experts should bear this in mind when expressing opinions or findings so that it is clear as to the level of certainty they can give. Is it for example, only to the level of more likely than not (i.e. on the balance of probabilities), or to the higher level, of being sure so that other reasonable possibilities can be excluded

5) Consideration must be given to explaining the use of statistical information in reports and what the statistics are seeking to establish.

6) Referenced documentation supporting any report must be included.

7) Analysis of supplementary paperwork such as prescription charts/fluid charts/observation charts needs to be undertaken. Paperwork differs from ward to ward let alone hospital to hospital. Ensure that if experts are commenting on procedures that have been carried out and are critical that they have already documented what procedures should have been in place and carried out in ***their*** experience. They cannot assume that the practices they follow are the same as the ones used by the staff at this hospital. They must spell things out.

8) Expert will be supplied with copies of relevant hospital protocols / procedures.

In order to assist experts with an understanding of the law the following passages may be relevant during their determinations.

UNLAWFUL ACT MANSLAUGHTER

'Unlawful act' manslaughter requires that:

(a) the killing must be the result of the accused's unlawful act, though not his unlawful omission. It must be unlawful in that it constitutes a crime. A lawful act does not become unlawful simply because it is performed negligently. The act must be a substantial (more than minimal) cause of death, but not necessarily the only operative cause (see "Causation" below);

(b) the unlawful act must be one, such as an assault, which all sober and reasonable people would inevitably realise must subject the victim to, at least, the risk of some harm resulting there from, albeit not serious harm;

(c) it is immaterial whether or not the accused knew that the act was unlawful and dangerous, and whether or not he intended harm; the mental state or intention required is that appropriate to the unlawful act in question; and

(d) "harm" means physical harm.

(Church [1966] 1 QB 59, DPP v Newbury [1977] AC 500, Goodfellow (1986) 83 Cr App R 23)

GROSS NEGLIGENCE MANSLAUGHTER

"Gross negligence" manslaughter requires the satisfaction of a four stage test:

(a) The existence of a duty of care owed by the defendant to the deceased;

(b) A breach of that duty of care, which

(c) Causes (or significantly contributes to) the death of the victim (see "Causation" below);

(d) And the breach should be characterised as gross negligence and therefore a crime.

(Adomako [1994] 3 All ER 79)

The standard and the breach are judged on the ordinary law of negligence. Those with a duty of care must act as the reasonable person would do in their position. The test is objective. It does not matter that the defendant did not appreciate the risk, provided that such a risk would have been obvious to a reasonable person in the defendant's position. The risk in question is a risk of death.

MURDER

Murder is the unlawful killing of a person with the intention to kill or cause grievous bodily harm. Nothing less will suffice. Foresight that a consequence is almost certain to result is not the same as intention, though it may be evidence of it. There is some legal authority for the proposition that, where the sole, bona fide intention of a doctor is the relief of pain through the administration of drugs, knowledge that those drugs will, as an unwanted side effect, also inevitably hasten the patient's death, that is not murder.

CAUSATION

When prosecuting for an offence of homicide, there are a number of elements the Crown has to prove, and has to prove them to the criminal standard i.e. 'beyond reasonable doubt.' One of those is the element of 'causation'. In simple terms this means that the prosecution must prove that the death was 'caused' (wholly or in part) by the defendant and ought to be straightforward but, '(W)here the law requires proof of the relationship between an act and its consequences as an element of responsibility, a simple and sufficient explanation of the basis of such relationship has proved notoriously elusive.' - *R v Cheshire* [1991] 3 All ER 670.

Recent experience has identified causation as a difficult element to prove in certain types of cases. These are typically, but not exclusively, cases involving medical negligence.

The classic statement on causation in manslaughter was provided by the present Lord Chief Justice in *R v HM Coroner for Inner London, ex parte Douglas-Williams* (1998) 1 All ER 344:

"...that the unlawful act caused death in the sense that it more than minimally, negligibly or trivially contributed to the death.

"In relation to both types of manslaughter it is an essential ingredient that the unlawful or negligent act must have caused the death at least in the manner described. If there is a situation where, on examination of the evidence, it cannot be said that the death in question was [not] caused by an act which was unlawful or negligent as I have described, then a critical link in the chain of causation is not established. That being so, a verdict of unlawful killing would not be appropriate and should not be left to the jury."
(There is an additional 'not' [now in brackets] in the penultimate sentence, otherwise the sentence does not make sense.)

It can be seen from this that the prosecution **must** be able to link the act to at least **an** operative cause of death. It is not sufficient to say that it **may have been** a cause of death.

Hastening/acceleration of death

This can be one of the most difficult aspects of causation. The 'hastening' or 'acceleration' of death and whether depriving a person of the opportunity to live can be a cause of death.

Death is inevitable. Any **action** that brings that day forward can therefore be said to have hastened or accelerated death and will itself be a cause of death. The case most often cited for such a proposition is *R v Dyson* [1909] 1 Cr App R 13. There the defendant had assaulted a child in November 1906 and December 1907. The child died in March 1908 but the charge of manslaughter did not specify the date of the assault (the 'year and a day' rule was then in force.) The child's condition had deteriorated as a result of the 1906 assault but the court said that the judge should have directed the jury to consider 'whether the appellant accelerated the death by his injury of December 1907'. In allowing the appeal the court said that 'it was not absolutely certain that the death had been accelerated' by the second assault as 'death may have been due to a fall'.

This is not a controversial proposition as it is simply a question whether the later act of the defendant brought about the death. Even if the deceased is dying (subject to the *de minimis* rule in *Sinclair*), if the defendant's act shortens life, causation is proved.

De minimis

It would not be sufficient to prove causation if the Crown could only show that the victim would have survived 'hours or days in circumstances where intervening life would have been of no real quality.' It is this meaning that is taken when referring to the *de minimis* rule. For example, if 'V' is dying, is in a coma, on life support and the defendant's act or omission brings forward the date of that inevitable death by hours or even days, if it can be said that there was 'no real quality' of life in that intervening period, the *de minimis* rule would apply. This is to be contrasted with a situation whereby the act or omission caused the coma and ensuing death or where there was a significant period between the act or omission and the ensuing death. It is not possible to be more definite as to the duration here but if 'V' survived in that state for more than a few days, *de minimis* would not apply and the ordinary rule of causation would do so instead.

Multifactorial

The insuperable difficulty comes when the doctors cannot say when or even if he may have died even if treated appropriately. This may be because they do not know the underlying cause of the illness or there are numerous factors present at death and it is not possible to identify which, if any had an operative influence on the death. In instances such as these, the death may be certified as 'multifactorial'. Although such a term should provide a warning to a prosecutor as to proof of causation, it does not necessarily mean that we cannot prove causation. If we can prove that one of the operative causes of death was due to the act or omission of the defendant, then this is sufficient to prove causation. Causation does not require that the particular cause would have caused death on its own, provided it is sufficient to be an operative **contribution** to the cause of death. Therefore, if the doctor in citing 'multifactorial' says that death was caused by a combination of factors and that factor 'X' was a more than minimal **contribution** to death (even if on its own it would not have caused death), if 'X' was caused by the act or omission of the defendant, we can show causation. This is so even if any one of the other factors would have been sufficient to have caused death on their own. This is an area that needs to be carefully analysed. What will not be sufficient to prove causation is a statement that, death was caused by any one or more of a number of causes and it cannot be said for sure that the relevant one was an operative cause, only that it might have been.

David Grocott
Detective Inspector
Major Crime Investigation Team

DRAFT REPORT

regarding

Patient Name (Ref No. egBJC/16)

PREPARED BY: Dr .....

AT THE REQUEST OF: Hampshire Constabulary

CONTENTS

1. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Executive Summary please.

1. INSTRUCTIONS

2. ISSUES

3. BRIEF CURRICULUM VITAE

Please insert

4. DOCUMENTATION

This Report is based on the following documents:

[1] Full paper set of medical records of .....

Any other documentation used during the completion of the report

5. CHRONOLOGY/CASE ABSTRACT

At this point the timeline already prepared could be inserted

6. TECHNICAL BACKGROUND / EXAMINATION OF THE FACTS IN ISSUE

8. OPINION

9. LITERATURE/REFERENCES

10. EXPERTS' DECLARATION

1. I understand that my overriding duty is to the court, both in preparing reports and in giving oral evidence. I have complied and will continue to comply with that duty.
2. I have set out in my report what I understand from those instructing me to be the questions in respect of which my opinion as an expert are required.
3. I have done my best, in preparing this report, to be accurate and complete. I have mentioned all matters which I regard as relevant to the opinions I have expressed. All of the matters on which I have expressed an opinion lie within my field of expertise.
4. I have drawn to the attention of the court all matters, of which I am aware, which might adversely affect my opinion.
5. Wherever I have no personal knowledge, I have indicated the source of factual information.
6. I have not included anything in this report which has been suggested to me by anyone, including the lawyers instructing me, without forming my own independent view of the matter.
7. Where, in my view, there is a range of reasonable opinion, I have indicated the extent of that range in the report.
8. At the time of signing the report I consider it to be complete and accurate. I will notify those instructing me if, for any reason, I subsequently consider that the report requires any correction or qualification.
9. I understand that this report will be the evidence that I will give under oath, subject to any correction or qualification I may make before swearing to its veracity.
10. I have attached to this report a statement setting out the substance of all facts and instructions given to me which are material to the opinions expressed in this report or upon which those opinions are based.

11. STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I confirm that insofar as the facts stated in my report are within my own knowledge I have made clear which they are and I believe them to be true, and the opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinion.

Signature: _____ Date: _____