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OPERATION ROCHESTER

**The Investigation into the deaths of
elderly patients at the**

GOSPORT WAR

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

The Gosport War Memorial Hospital

- **Community Hospital managed by Portsmouth Health Care Trust.**
- **Elderly patients for palliative, rehabilitative or respite care.**
- **Operated by Nursing and Support Staff.**
- **Clinical expertise provided by visiting General Practitioners and Clinical Assistants.**



Operation Rochester

- **Investigation by Hampshire Police Major Crime Investigation Team.**
- **Allegations that non-palliative care elderly patients inappropriately administered Diamorphine, resulting in deaths.**
- **Deaths as far back as 1989.**
- **Three Police investigations.**

First Police Investigation

Gladys Richards aged 91 years

- **Died in August 1998 whilst recovering from hip replacement operation.**
- **Daughters complained to the Police that she had been unlawfully killed.**
- **Investigation conducted by local CID at Gosport.**
- **File to CPS who considered criminal prosecution not justified.**
- **Relatives unhappy with decision and made complaint against Police.**

Second Police Investigation

- **MCIT commenced investigation April 2000.**
- **Expert opinion by Professor Brian Livesley.**
- **Provided two reports which concluded that Gladys Richards had been unlawfully killed.**
- **File to CPS.**

Current Police Investigation (Third)

- **As a result of 1991 documents it was decided that further Police enquiries were necessary.**
- **Enquiries are being conducted in stages, the first in relation to the 1991 documents.**
- **To date the relatives of 62 patients have contacted Police.**
- **Medical records of 62 patients on DVD for analysis by yourselves, second stage.**
- **Subject to your findings, consideration will be given to further investigations, stage three.**

1991 Documents

- **September 2002 Staff at GWMH assembled and informed of intended audit by Professor Baker.**
- **After meeting a Nurse handed to Hospital Management a bundle of documents.**
- **Documents related to concerns raised in 1991 regarding mortality rate and use of Diamorphine.**

Intervening Developments Between Investigations

CHI

- **October 2001 CHI launched investigation.**
- **CHI concluded that a number of factors contributed failure of Trust systems to ensure good quality patient care.**
- **The Trust now has adequate policies and guidelines in place governing prescription and administration of pain relieving medicines.**
- **Following CHI report the CMO commissioned Professor Richard Baker to conduct statistical analysis of mortality rates.**

Review of Cases

- **Reports to Professor Ford and Mundy reviewed.**
- **Not forwarded to CPS as the four additional cases were of a similar nature to Richards and would attract a similar reply.**
- **No further Police investigations.**
- **Copies of reports forwarded to GMC, Nursing and Midwifery Council and CHI.**

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Professor Ford

- **RICHARDS** – Inappropriate prescribing of Opiates. Likely drugs hastened death.
- **CUNNINGHAM** – Initial prescription of various drugs reckless. Doses inappropriate and likely contributed to death.
- **WILKIE** – Prescription of Diamorphine inappropriate and may have hastened death.
- **WILSON** – Inappropriately treated with high doses of Opiate and sedative drugs, may have hastened death.
- **PAGE** – Cannot identify reason for prescription of Diamorphine and other drugs. Inappropriate and potentially hazardous prescription.

Publicity

- Local media coverage of **Gladys Richards** case prompted other families to raise concerns.
- Police selected at random four more cases:
 - Arthur Cunningham – 79 years**
 - Alice Wilkie – 81 years**
 - Robert Wilson – 75 years**
 - Eva Page – 87 years**
- Expert opinion sought from two further Medical Professors, Ford and Mundy.
- Reviewed medical records of Richards and additional four cases.

Crown Prosecution Service

- Treasury Counsel meeting with Professor Livesley in June 2001.
- TC concluded that Professor Livesley's assertions were flawed in respect of his analysis of the law.
- CPS advised insufficient evidence to provide realistic prospect of a conviction against any person.