

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.

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.

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.

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.

Professor Mundy

- **RICHARDS** – Did not report on.
- **CUNNINGHAM** – Morphine started prematurely. Doses increased without indications as to why.
- **WILKIE** – Dose of Diamorphine prescribed was excessive.
- **WILSON** – No other analgesia was tried prior to Morphine.
- **PAGE** – No documentation of any pain. Started on opiate analgesia inappropriately.

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.

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.

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.**

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.

GOSPORT WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

