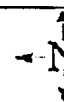


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First published on Friday 21 September 2001:

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THE GRIEVING daughter of a 91-year-old woman confronted health chiefs at a public meeting yesterday over the death of her mother at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Gillian MacKenzie, 67, refuses to accept a Crown Prosecution Service report claiming there was insufficient evidence to prosecute doctors over the death of her mum Gladys Richards in August 1998.

Mrs Richards had been admitted to the hospital for rehabilitation following surgery on a damaged hip at neighbouring Royal Hospital Haslar.

During the Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust public meeting held at Fareham civic offices Mrs MacKenzie asked Max Millet, chief executive of Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust, to answer her "many questions" over her mother's death.

Mr Millet pledged to answer each of Mrs MacKenzie's questions by letter. He refused to be drawn into a face-to-face discussion.

Afterwards Mrs MacKenzie, who lives in Code A told the Daily Echo: "I'm not satisfied at all that mum was treated correctly.

"She underwent surgery on her hip at Royal Hospital Haslar and had been making a very good recovery at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, but in a matter of days was told that she was about to die.

"Some quarters are saying that the diamorphine (painkillers) she was given can cause pneumonia but I don't believe that's what caused her death.

"I will now wait to hear back from Mr Millet. I hope he can answer some very challenging questions - nothing else will do."

In 1999, The Police Complaints Authority upheld a complaint by Mrs MacKenzie that senior officers in Gosport CID had failed to thoroughly pursue their inquiry into Mrs Richards death.

Supt John James of Hampshire Police Major Crime Unit is now heading a new team investigating Mrs Richards case and the claims of eight other families who have since come forward over the deaths of their loved ones at under-fire Gosport War Memorial Hospital over the past ten years.

Mrs MacKenzie added: "I would like to meet members of the eight other families. We have a lot in common and maybe if we put our heads together we can help make sure that no other families have to suffer the pain of not fully knowing how a loved one died."

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