

Expert Review

Eileen Hillier

No. BJC/25

Date of Birth: Code A

Miss Hillier was admitted to Gosport War Memorial Hospital on 23 May 1995. She was aged seventy-six at the time of admission. She was a retired French teacher and lived in her own home.

She was treated in January 1995 for psychotic depression with electro convulsive therapy and discharged in March 1995.

Her previous medical history included carcinoma of the breast for which she had undergone a mastectomy and radiotherapy. Although she had no recurrence of her carcinoma she had developed post radiation damage to her chest wall with a discharging sinus.

Following admission in May 1995 care plans were commenced for poor diet and food intake, low mood and treatment of the sinus.

During her inpatient stay she had several falls, one of which required sutures to a scalp injury. At this time her mood fluctuated, the clinical notes recording at times that Miss Hillier was quite bright and at others "still low".

On 28 July 1995 there was a significant bleed from the upper sinus on the chest wall during the night. A further dramatic blood loss occurred on 30 July 1995 and at that time a diagnosis was made that the chest wall sinus was eroding into a main blood vessel.

Miss Hillier's clinical condition deteriorated on 31 July 1995 and she was prescribed at that time Diamorphine 10mgs four hourly together with modest doses of Diazepam for agitation.

The expert review of this case noted that Miss Hillier was physically deteriorating and, following the consensus opinion for palliative care, appropriately low doses of opiates were used.