

Daughters blame doctor for death of their mother



HEARING Gillian Mackenzie outside Portsmouth Guildhall and inset, her mother Gladys Richards

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THE daughters of a pensioner who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital have blamed the doctor treating her for their mother's death.

Gillian Mackenzie, 79, and her sister Lesley O'Brien, spoke on the first day of a two-week inquest into the death of their mother Gladys Richards.

Yesterday, during an hour-long statement at the inquest at Portsmouth Guildhall, Mrs Mackenzie gave her account of details, leading up to the death of her mother.

In it she described how it was revealed her mother had fallen about 17 times in the space of six months at the nursing home she was staying at, how her mother's health improved when coming off an anti-depressant and how she was confused as to why her mother was placed on the painkiller diamorphine.

As previously reported, Mrs Richards, 91, died in Gosport War Memorial Hospital (GWMH), on August 21, 1998.

The court heard how Mrs Richards had been living at the Glen Heathers nursing home, in Lee-on-the-Solent, for around four years.

There she suffered a fall, and Mrs Richards was admitted to the Royal Haslar Hospital, to have an operation.

At the inquest, Mrs Mackenzie said: 'I received a call from my niece which informed me my mother had been admitted to hospital and was about to

Inquest hears that decision was made to give pain relief to 91-year-old, not to try to heal her

undergo surgery. She had suffered a fall and was going to have an operation to address her hip at the Haslar.

'I have no criticism of the Haslar hospital, the care was professional.

'It was decided she was going to GWMH for rehabilitation for four weeks.'

While at the Haslar, Mrs Richards was taken off the drug trazodone, which is given to treat anxiety disorders and depression.

Mrs Mackenzie said: 'She was more alert than at the nursing home, she seemed to speak more coherently. My mother was eating well and looking well.'

But after arriving at GWMH, Mrs Richards suffered a second fall, and was taken back to the Haslar, where her new, right hip was put back into place.

Then she was taken back to GWMH where she suffered from haematoma — where blood leaks out into tissues.

Mrs Mackenzie said that Dr Jane Barton, whose care Mrs Richards had

been under, decided not to send the 91-year-old to the Haslar.

Mrs Richards was put on to diamorphine, and was told her death was imminent. She lived for a further four days.

Mrs Mackenzie said: 'I believe my mother could have been treated at the Haslar. In my view a consultant should have been sourced.'

'In my opinion, Dr Barton's pure, gross negligence led to the death of my mother.'

And Mrs O'Brien said she couldn't understand why her mother wasn't taken back to Haslar.

She said: 'I told Dr Barton I had been to Haslar and they said they would be able to readmit my mother, so the cause of her pain could be treated, and not just the pain itself.'

'Dr Barton said it was not appropriate for a 91-year-old to go back, after surviving further surgery.'

'I trusted her at the time. It was only in hindsight I found I was wrong.'

(Proceeding)

In my opinion, Dr Barton's pure, gross negligence led to the death of my mother

Gillian Mackenzie