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The Surgery
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Dear Sir,

Our Ref:

We, the Partners of Dr Jane Barton, wish to protest strongly at the insensitive article in The News of September 18th.

Despite the feature being headlined " Hospital enquiry leads to misconduct charge " and the first paragraph stating " Dr Jane Barton....is to be accused of serious professional misconduct" these matters have yet to be determined.

It is not until three-quarters of the way through the article, when most readers will have moved on to the next feature, that you, quite correctly, state " In the meanwhile, further enquiries may eventually rule out the referral to the conduct committee".

Would it not have been more professional and sensitive for you to include a "may" in your initial comments and give higher profile to your later statement that, in fact, there may well be no case to answer?

We, having known Dr Barton's high Professional standards over many years have no doubt about her abilities and this view is shared by Dr Barton's colleagues in other Gosport Practices. Numerous patients, also, are already contacting the Surgery expressing their unreserved support for Dr. Barton and we hope you will be even-handed enough to publish their views should they write to you.

We hope you will share our satisfaction in hearing that at a further Interim Meeting of the General Medical Council this week the Committee recommended that Dr. Barton continue in full Medical Practice.

We do hope that after the further audit has been undertaken you will then publish these facts in an equally eye-catching manner.

We conclude by making a plea that in areas such as this where any person's reputation is at stake a fairer and less sensational reporting style is adopted.

Drs. Knapman, Beasley, Peters, Brigg and Brook.