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GP: I wouldn't change the way I treated dead patient

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A DOCTOR said she wouldn't change the treatment of an elderly patient whose death sparked a police investigation, a panel heard.

Dr Jane Barton said she would do 'nothing' to alter the way she cared for Gladys Richards at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Daughter Gillian Mackenzie complained to the police after her 91-year-old mum died on Daedalus ward – where the GP was a clinical assistant – amid concerns over the use of powerful painkillers and sedatives.

Dr Barton was later arrested on suspicion of attempted murder.

However, the case was dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service due to insufficient evidence.

At a General Medical Council hearing in London yesterday, her counsel, Timothy Langdale QC, asked if there was anything she would change about how she cared for Mrs Richards, but Dr Barton replied: 'Nothing.'

When asked if starting Mrs Richards on a cocktail of sedative midazolam and painkiller diamorphine higher than the recommended starting level was excessive, the GP said: 'It seemed a very appropriate starting dose for her symptoms.'

She added: 'I considered that there was potential harm and side effects to it but my overriding priority was to make her as pain-free as possible.'

Mrs Richards died on August 21, 1999 – three days after being readmitted after treatment for a dislocated hip at neighbouring Royal Hospital Haslar.

The widow was transferred there after injuring herself in a fall at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Dr Barton's conduct is now being examined in relation to the care, treatment and subsequent deaths of 12 patients between 1995 and 1999.

She has already admitted that she failed to keep adequate notes, and that dose ranges of painkiller diamorphine and sedative midazolam she prescribed to some patients were too wide, and could have led to them being given too many drugs.

She also admits some of her prescriptions were 'potentially hazardous'.

However, Dr Barton denies serious professional misconduct.

(Proceeding)