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13 May 2009

Dear Teresa

Gosport Inquests (Joint Instruction)

Many thanks for your letter of 6 May.

I can confirm that I am instructed to represent the Trust at the forthcoming Inquest into the death of Gladys Richards. At the moment I am considering with the NHS the jurisdiction of the Coroner in this matter. I take the view that it is now so long ago that I am uncertain as to the purpose of the Inquest here and certainly would be interested to hear from the Coroner as to why he believes there is jurisdiction in this case in the absence of permission from the Minister.

I am sure that you will agree when I say that there comes a point in time when a "line has to be drawn" in these matters.

I don't anticipate that there will be any conflict in my assisting the medical staff in this matter though to date I don't have the exact details.

Verdict

At the outset I can say that none of the verdicts suggested the drugs were given on any other basis than for therapeutic purposes. The issues of unlawful killing or "neglect" did not arise.

Cases of Devine, Wilson and Packman

In these 3 cases the Jury determined on the evidence that the administration of the Diamorphine contributed more than minimally to the deaths of these patients. The Jury determined further, that although the dosage given was for therapeutic purposes it was at an inappropriate level in the circumstances.

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Cases of Cunningham and Lavender

In these 2 cases the Jury determined that the dosage of the Diamorphine did contribute more than minimally to the death of these patients. But in the circumstances it was determined that the dosage was to be both therapeutic and appropriate.

In the remaining 5 cases it was determined that the drug regime did not contribute to the patient's death.

I hope this helps and I am happy to continue to liaise with you on future Inquests.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

