

NURSING & MIDWIFERY COUNCIL

Protecting the public through professional standards

Private and Confidential

Director of Nursing
Gosport War Memorial Hospital
Bury Road
Gosport
Hampshire
PO12 3PW

3 July 2002
PRE/5/TG/12053

Direct line: 020 7333 6616
Fax No: 020 7636 2903
Email: conduct@nmc-uk.org

Dear Sir/Madam

The NMC has received a complaint from **Code A** concerning the treatment her mother, Mrs Dulcie Middleton, received between 29 May 2001 and 16 August 2001.

A copy of **Code A** letter of complaint is enclosed which gives details of her concerns.

In accordance with the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors (Professional Conduct) Rules 1993 the UKCC is required to investigate allegations of misconduct where registered practitioners are involved.

This matter will be placed before the UKCC's Preliminary Proceedings Committee in due course. The members will decide what further action (if any) should be taken with particular regard to whether the matter may justify the removal of a practitioner's name from the register.

In order that the members may be in possession of all the facts I should be grateful for your comments concerning this complaint.

I thank you for your assistance and look forward to hearing from you.

Code A



Director of Conduct
23 Portland Place
London
W1B 1PZ

Code A

25 JUN 2002

Tel **Code A**

19th June 2002.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to register a formal complaint as to the nursing care that my mother, Mrs Dulcie Middleton, received while in The Gosport Memorial Hospital from 29th May 2001 until 16th August 2001.

My mother was of sound mind and body before her stroke on 10th May 2001, completely self-sufficient and very active.

Haslar Hospital stabilized her after the stroke, and brought her to the position where she was sufficiently fit for rehabilitation, when she was transferred to the Memorial Hospital, she was very positive and optimistic about recovery.

When she was first there she appeared to be making progress, sitting out of bed, going into the day room in a wheel chair, and having her hair washed and set.

Eating and drinking were her biggest problems, we were told by her doctor that she must have help at all times, especially with meals, as she had trouble swallowing and was very slow, but help was not forthcoming.

On one of my visits, which were every day, apart from around six missed days in three and a half months, I found my mother laying in bed, she had not been sat up, her meal was in front of her and too far away for her to reach, cutlery was missing and the bell was out of her reach on the wall so she could not call for assistance, and the meal was cold so she could not eat it.

Given the above conditions you would not expect anyone to recover, subsequently she lost weight and dehydrated, and was then administered a fluid drip and a nasal feeding tube, I am sure that none of this would have been needed if the proper nursing care had been provided.

At one point too much fluid was given, she had a fluid overload, how can this happen with a catheter in situ, and a drip, why was she not being properly monitored?

As a result of this on 4th July 2001 my mother had congestive cardiac failure, this was confirmed with examinations and chest X-Ray. Her heart, lungs and and both legs were damaged

because of the fluid, which bloated her, her legs were bleeding with the skin split open, she was bandaged from feet to knees until she died.

On entering the Hospital the staff knew that my mother was being treated by her own Doctor for blood pressure and angina, so fluid overload should have been avoided at all cost.

Due to the state that she was now in she did not leave her bed again. Physiotherapy for her legs had to stop, and I don't believe that she had physio for chest and lungs etc, which she needed as she lay in bed week after week, deteriorating and growing weaker.

The next moves were a nebulizer, diuretics and potassium, to put back what she had lost. One evening when an impatient nurse was in a hurry to give my mother (who had a problem with swallowing) her potassium, she told my mother to "hurry up or I won't put your nebulizer on" which frightened and panicked my mother and didn't help her to swallow. I reported this incident to the nurse in charge.

Some time later she was transferred back to Haslar for a stomach Peg, this did not help, she was in great pain, her tummy swelled and rumbled, and she was very uncomfortable and sick.

On one visit that I made I found her in the ward on her own sitting in a PVC chair with a sick bowl in front of her, and another used bowl on the table, (so the nursing staff knew that she was unwell), she was choking while being sick, covered in sweat, her hair wet through. She could not ring for help, as the bell was out of reach on the wall as usual, I called a nurse who called a doctor, we put a sheet behind her to get her body off the chair. The doctor examined her and decided to do an X-Ray which showed a blocked bowel, this was dealt with on the ward, which was very unpleasant and humiliating for my mother and I had to leave the room, as I could not stand to hear my mothers cries of pain. After this my mother asked me to take her away from the Hospital. I did ask, and I had asked before, but was unable to.

Would you please tell me if you think that three quarters of an hour is acceptable to make an eighty five year old lady wait for a bed pan? After asking three times I was told that my mother had a pad on the bed and she could use that, I don't think so, I told the nurse to bring a bed pan now, which she did.

My mother was a very clean person and worried that she smelt due to the catheter, so she mentioned her worry to a nurse, the reply was "don't worry, all old ladies smell." This was a totally inappropriate and thoughtless remark.

Patients well-being is not taken into consideration, sitting out of bed for long periods causes the elderly to feel the cold, my mothers clothes were not able to be pulled around her legs as she usually sat in a sling, her legs were bare even though I provided socks and asked that a blanket be put around

her legs, there were lots of blankets for this purpose.

I am also worried as to what drugs my mother was given, she behaved very strangely some days.

My final complaint is the poor standard of nursing care, some nurses were uncaring and had an unprofessional attitude to vulnerable helpless patients, who may be elderly but still have dignity and belong to families who value and love them.

Furthermore, in my view nurses failed to carry out doctors orders and lacked humanity, where is the caring profession going, it is failing the elderly.

I hope you have gathered from this letter that I am very distressed and annoyed about care at Gosport Memorial Hospital, and hope to get some answers from the investigations that are in progress.

I await your reply,

Yours Sincerely

Code A