

5-DEATHS DOC 'IS A MONSTER' - Anger over 'therapy' jabs

Sun, The (London, England) - April 21, 2009

- Author/Byline: JAMIE PYATT

- Edition: 01

- Section: News

- Page: 4

A DOCTOR was branded a "monster" yesterday after an inquest ruled large doses of painkillers HAD contributed to the deaths of five elderly patients.

Families of the five had campaigned for more than ten years to have their cases heard - and now want a public inquiry into the hospital scandal.

The inquest in Portsmouth had spent four weeks looking at ten deaths at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

The jury decided medication such as diamorphine prescribed by Dr Jane Barton had not hastened the deaths in half the cases.

But it ruled they "more than minimally" contributed to the deaths of Robert Wilson, 74, Geoffrey Packman, 67, Elsie Lavender, 83, Arthur Cunningham, 79, and Elsie Devine, 88.

The jury also found that for Mr Wilson, Ms Devine and Mr Packman, the use of painkillers was inappropriate - but that in ALL cases drugs had been given for therapeutic reasons.

Elsie's granddaughter Bridget said after the ruling: "If somebody is going to die it is not up to the doctor to decide when. It is patients' basic right to have their families around them in the last few days, a right which Jane Barton took at will. We think she is fiercely inhuman - a monster." Mr Wilson's son Iain had told the hearing his father had whispered to him his last words: "Help me son, they are killing me." But three probes by police and another by the General Medical Council had found no grounds for further action.

And yesterday "highly respected" Dr Barton, now working as a GP, insisted: "I have always acted with care, concern and compassion towards my patients.

"I am pleased the jury recognised that in all of these cases, drugs were only given for therapeutic purposes." j.pyatt@the-sun.co.uk

- Caption: Dead ... from left, Geoffrey Packman, Arthur Cunningham and Robert Wilson

- Record: 22942702

- Copyright: (c) News Group Newspapers Limited 2009