

**Golden Jubilee National Hospital**  
National Waiting Time Centre Board

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### The Scottish Advanced Heart Failure Service

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Dear Miss Turnbull,

Re: Death Certificate of Eileen O'Hara (Deceased) DOB: 09/10/1930

Further to our email correspondence I would like to write formally with a response to your questions. This lady's death is the subject of one of the components of the Penrose Enquiry. I can confirm that I looked after her from 4<sup>th</sup> May 2003 until her death on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003. When I met her she had been seen by Intensive Care 4 days previously and we noted her multiple medical problems and that she was not fit for admission to Intensive Care and had a very poor prognosis. She had also been looked after by Dr Nicholas Goodfield, Consultant Cardiologist, Stobhill Hospital who has provided extensive notes detailing her past medical history.

The major question is the cause of her death. She came in with a diagnosis of pancreatitis. She had a collection around her pancreas which was thought to be the source of her infection. She had developed septicaemia with a coagulase negative staphylococcus and an alpha haemolytic streptococcus from her blood cultures. She was on broad spectrum antibiotics and the bacteriologists have been closely involved. Mrs O'Hara had several longstanding chronic conditions. She had been found to have hepatitis C in 1995 and had a liver biopsy which showed cirrhosis at that point. She also had longstanding diabetes for which she was on insulin therapy. Her cardiac disease was that of 2 previous mitral valve replacements.

The cause of her death was multi-organ failure secondary to overwhelming sepsis. Her C-reactive protein was very high as was her white cell count. She had renal failure and worsening hepatic failure in the context of her overwhelming sepsis.

In summary, this lady had overwhelming sepsis felt likely secondary to pancreatic collection. She tolerated this poorly due to her longstanding liver and heart disease and developed new acute renal failure.

I think the above is a better summary than her death certificate which does list hepatic failure, sepsis and a previous mitral valve replacement but perhaps not necessarily in the correct order. Hepatitis C was the cause of her hepatic failure but this was not mentioned on the death certificate. Death certificates are not always the most detailed and robust means of documenting the mode or mechanism of death of patients and this is recognised throughout the medical community.

If I could be of further help I would be happy to provide further information.

There is a mention in the final discharge letter by Mr Robertson that she may have had bacterial endocarditis but as Cardiologists we thought this unlikely.

Yours sincerely

Dr Mark Petrie  
Consultant Cardiologist

*MP*  
*PTT*  
*23/2/11*

Authorised on 23/02/2011 14:16:19 by Secretary Patricia Begley, on behalf of Mark Petrie.