



Care Homes
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Mum **Lucy Disney** taken 11th October 2004

Emma Disney is a fully qualified Aviation Engineer and knows only full well how strictly regulated that industry is with regards to all aspects of safety

My mum Lucy had been a Care Assistant for 11 years when she became ill in April, 2004. The illness began with breathing difficulties which she described as her lungs continually filling with fluid to the throat. She visited the Doctor, 2 months later, who diagnosed irreversible lung damage, the probable cause being from smoking. No tests were recommended by the Doctor or carried out to confirm the damage to the lungs. During the next few months, the prescribed drugs were ineffective and the symptoms progressively became worse, resulting in a reduced ability to go about her normal routine.

At the end of July 2004, our family went away on a short holiday where my mum suffered from multiple insect bites on both of her lower legs. When we arrived home, my mum went straight back to work in her job at the Nursing Home.

She again visited her GP who prescribed antibiotics for a routine skin infection. At this time, my Mum mentioned to the doctor her concerns that maybe it could be an MRSA infection. These comments were brought about from her knowledge of patients coming from hospital to the nursing home where she worked as well as other stories and cases reported in the media. The doctor dismissed these comments based on the fact that she had not actually been into any hospital as a patient herself.

At the beginning of September 2004 my mum again visited the GP as her leg wounds had increased further in width and depth. The GP was now beginning to become concerned at the aggressive development of the sores and open wounds.

The question was raised by me at this point as to whether my mum should actually have been in hospital. By now my mum had been unable to eat for 1 month due to sickness, living only on ice cubes. She could not sleep due to panic attacks caused by the breathing problems and her leg wounds were causing excruciating pain. She was screaming at every movement she made. She was also by now bed-bound, unable to clean or wash as she was unable to stand. The doctor did not agree with my suggestion, saying she was best left to rest at home.

During the second week of September, whilst having her legs wrapped for a second time, my mum was told that there was a prescription waiting at reception for her. I went to reception to collect the items. The antibiotic minocyclin was prescribed. On the back of the prescription there was some hand writing stating 'Yes, MRSA'. I told my mum directly. The Nurse wrapping her legs was also shocked as she had not been informed by any of the doctors at the surgery. No appointment was available at that

time to again see the GP and my mum was sent home. No further information was provided by the surgery regarding MRSA or any other infections. We knew nothing! My mum by now was suffering beyond anything bearable. She would not go to hospital as she felt sure they would not accept her due to the MRSA. This she felt was also the reason the doctor would not admit her to the hospital. She felt compelled to stay at home in her bed. All of her teeth by now had fallen out and still she had not eaten.

By the beginning of October, an appointment was still not available at the GP clinic, not even for the wrapping of her legs. On the 11th of October 2004, my younger brother found her dead. She was aged only 44.

An autopsy was carried out following her death. The cause of death was stated as pulmonary thrombo-emboli, meaning blood clots caused by wounding of the lower limbs. No lung damage was found. Could this have been the MRSA? All organs in her body were found to be in a healthy state, nothing to prove the effects of her being a smoker.

Our family have never recovered from the loss of our mum. She was a daughter, a mother and a grandmother with years of life ahead of her. Her suffering from the effects of the MRSA infection we could only imagine despite seeing for ourselves the pain and suffering it caused her. She was left to rot and die in her bed. If I had known at the time she was still alive, the effects of MRSA as I do now, she could still be alive.

I am now a representative of **NCHI** and I work very closely with the others to raise awareness of all Healthcare Infections, in all walks of life and Patient Safety incidents

NCHI

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