



MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurse is victim of doctor's wrong diagnosis

A nurse from Maidstone has been awarded a five figure compensation after a missed diagnosis of a tendon injury meant she had to leave the job she loved in accident and emergency departments because she could no longer do cardiac massage for heart attack victims.

Hayley Beevis, age 40, of Larkfield, Aylesford, received the compensation after clinical negligence specialist solicitors, Bolt Burdon Kemp, took on her case. She accidentally cut two fingers on her left hand while she was cooking three years ago. She went to A&E at Maidstone Hospital concerned that the severe pain she was experiencing was the result of severed tendons.

"If it just needed a steri-strip I could have done it myself," said Mrs. Beevis, who works as an agency nurse in A & E departments and was actually employed at Maidstone Hospital at the time, "but I was having such severe pain up my arm, which was different to having a cut finger. I knew the problem that damaged tendons can cause and that there is only a 10 day window to treat a tendon before it is damaged forever. "

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Mrs. Beevis explained this to a locum doctor at Maidstone Hospital, who told her the tendons were OK and stitched the wound.

"I took him at his word," said Mrs. Beevis, "because I didn't want to make a fuss. I thought I had overreacted. Nurses can be a bit dramatic at times."

However, when the stitches were removed a week later, she realised she could not bend her fingers properly. There was no improvement over time, and a doctor at the hospital where she was working recommended she visit a hand specialist at East Grinstead hospital.

The specialist diagnosed severed tendons and told Mrs. Beevis - who is left handed - she would need corrective surgery but that she might never get full use of her fingers back and the operation might make the situation worse.

The damaged tendons meant that she was no longer able to grip and had no strength in two of her fingers so she was unable to carry out heart massage to heart attack victims. Since Mrs. Beevis works for an agency, she does not receive sick pay, and the surgery involved taking time off work. She was unable to drive, and had to use taxis to take her autistic son to and from his school. To help her recoup some of the money she had lost, she called on the services of Islington Clinical Negligence specialist solicitors, Bolt Burdon Kemp.

"It's surprising that the doctor didn't take more notice of what Mrs. Beevis told him. He should have known that a nurse had enough expertise to know when something was more than just a cut," said Kirstin Moss a clinical negligence specialist at Bolt Burdon Kemp. "It was apparent that Mrs. Beevis deserved compensation from Maidstone Hospital after the doctor's misdiagnosis".

Mrs. Beevis was examined by a Professor of Hand Surgery at Derby Hospital. Even though Mrs Beevis would have had a small permanent injury in any event,

when Maidstone Hospital received his report, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust agreed to pay Mrs Beevis £15,000.

“I’m delighted with the result”, said Mrs. Beevis. “The time off work was really difficult for me. I’ve had to re-think my career and now work in a doctor’s surgery rather than an A&E Department”.

“I just hope that doctor will listen more carefully to his patients in future” she added.

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