

**INQUIRY INTO OFF-PROTOCOL PRESCRIBING OF  
CHEMOTHERAPY IN NSW**

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Partially  
Confidential

Hello,

This submission is in respect to the off-protocol therapy given by Dr Grygel to head and neck cancer patients at St Vincents hospital.

Around June 2014, my brother, Dr Peter Sternhell was diagnosed with cancer of the tonsils which spread rapidly after surgery. This was treated by Dr Grygel for the chemotherapy side of things.

I recall vividly a conversation I had with Peter in the middle stages of the chemotherapy, noting that he had not lost any hair and that he did not look that knocked about from the chemotherapy. I thought this was rather odd, since one would expect someone with a rapidly spreading cancer on chemotherapy to be losing a lot of hair and to be rather sick. He mentioned the medication (Carboplatin) and the dose, noting it was a low dosage. (He knew that I wanted to study medicine, but did not get the marks.) I said to him-low dosage chemo for a fast moving cancer-that's BS. He replied that that is the way it is done these days. Peter always took a very active interest in his treatment, being a specialist himself. He was one of the staff psychiatrists at St Vincents. It was a scene I recall vividly, since it was so illogical to treat a rapidly spreading cancer with a low dosage of chemotherapy with hardly any side effects. Peter was always very trusting and took all medical advice to the letter.

Later chemotherapy did not knock Peter around as much as would be expected, not that I am an expert. The cancer seemed to spread further and further with each round of chemo, until it reached his spine, when he had to go to hospital, never to leave alive.

The worst part is that if Peter had been able to live even a couple of more years, he could have been of great benefit for the upbringing of his 2 sons.

Hopefully the inquiry can tighten up protocols to prevent this sort of thing happening again. It is quite absurd that a non-medical person like myself, although being in allied health can see that something was fishy, but the medical system behind it allowed the off-protocol activity to persist for so long and on a fair number of patients.

I am willing to stand before a panel to answer questions, although I will need time to shuffle around patients.

My contact  
details

20/2/2017

Dr Jim Sternhell B.D.S.