

7 August 2019

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West Sussex Coroner's Service  
County Record Office  
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Our ref EH105181

Dear Ms Harold,

Thank you for your letter, dated 19 June 2019, regarding the tragic death of James William Francis

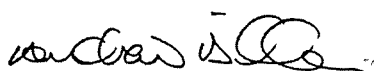
We have considered the circumstances surrounding Mr Francis' death and the concerns raised in your report and in particular the concerns that existing NICE guidance on head injury may not be appropriate for instances where a person experiences a non-direct head trauma

We consider that the NICE guideline on the assessment and early management of head injury (CG176) is relevant to the circumstances described, since it covers the assessment and early management of head injuries caused by both direct and indirect traumas. This includes all patients who presented with a *suspect* or *confirmed* traumatic head injury with or without other major trauma

The guideline defines head injury '*as any trauma to the head other than superficial injuries to the face*'. In addition, the guideline specifically defines a 'closed head injury' as '*a blow to the head or a severe shaking causing tearing, shearing or stretching of the nerves at the base of the brain, blood clots in or around the brain or oedema (swelling) of the brain. There is no penetration of the skull or brain tissue by an object, the skull may be fractured but this does not result in a direct connection between the brain and the outside (see Penetrating Brain Injury)*'. This definition can be found in the glossary within the full guideline document for CG176

The guideline is currently undergoing a surveillance review exercise to determine whether it should be updated. As a result of your report, the review is likely to conclude that an update is required so that it is clearer that the guideline applies to indirect head injury (for example, by making the definition more accessible to users). A final surveillance review decision is due to be published in September 2019

Yours sincerely,



Sir Andrew Dillon  
Chief Executive