



# 'Drug withdrawal a factor in death'

## Family's claim after schizophrenic, 39, dies

Kirsty Hough

THE family of a schizophrenic has questioned whether a lack of medication may have led to his death.

A post-mortem examination found Andrew Pooley, 39, of Witham, died from a pulmonary embolism, exacerbated by his schizophrenia.

Mr Pooley had been diagnosed with schizophrenia when he was 17 and was taking clozapine to treat the condition.

An inquest at Chelmsford Coroners Court heard how, for reasons that were not made clear, he had run out of his drug in May.

The following month, he was admitted to Broomfield Hospital, in Chelmsford, on June 4 with a chest infection.

On June 13, while at the hospital, he became irritated and aggressive and suffered a pulmonary embolism, which led to a cardiac arrest from which he could not be resuscitated.

Dr Martin Goddard, who car-

“He was sedated because he did not have the drug, which meant he was immobile and dehydrated

MADELAINE POWER

ried out the post-mortem examination, said in his evidence: “There is a rare risk that clozapine can cause pulmonary embolisms which means it is unusual, but has been recorded.

“Stopping the medication would not make him have a pulmonary embolism – in fact it would have reduced his risk.”

Speaking on behalf of Andrew Pooley's family, Madeline Seibert of Attwaters Jameson Hill Solicitors said: “Andrew's family are devastated by his death. He was a cheerful person and a real gentleman. He provided great support to his mother, who he lived with.

“The family are not happy

with the Inquest finding of 'natural causes'.

“They believe that Andrew was badly let down by the system and that, due to various failings in care, he experienced an unplanned and unmanaged withdrawal of his clozapine medication.

“The family believe that as a result Andrew suffered from a significant deterioration in his health and his untimely death.”

Area coroner for Essex, Eleanor McGann, recorded Mr Pooley's death was due to natural causes.

However, she added the family could raise the matter with Broomfield Hospital if they believed the lack of clozapine was a factor in his death.

A spokesman for Mid Essex Hospital Trust said: “We offer our sincere condolences to the family of Mr Pooley.

“Should the family wish to discuss the care and treatment we provided we would encourage contact with our Patient Advice and Liaison Service so we can enable this to happen directly.”

