

# Mother calls for change in brain injuries advice

## Joanna launches petition to help other patients after son's death

By Rachel Millard

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A BEREAVED mother's campaign to ensure no family suffers the same fate as hers has taken a new step.

Joanna Lane has launched a petition to change the type of advice given to brain injury sufferers before they are discharged from hospital.

Mrs Lane, from Coulsdon, wants brain injury patients to be given more warning of potential long-term hormonal effects.

She believes a bad fall on his head as a child may have been behind the suicide of her 31-year-old son, Christopher Lane, in 2008.

### Suffered

Retired teacher Mrs Lane thinks he probably suffered from post-traumatic hypopituitarism (PTHP) due to the fall.

The condition is a hormone deficiency caused by damage to the pituitary gland in the brain, which controls hormones.

Symptoms include depression, infertility, weight fluctuation and other problems.

It is estimated that 30 per cent of serious brain injury survivors suffer from the condition, but it can also be triggered by less severe knocks.

Mrs Lane wants people to know to look out for the signs, as hor-



**BATTLE:** Joanna Lane has campaigned for better advice for brain injury sufferers since her son Christopher died five years ago

mon deficiency is relatively easy to screen for and treat, but can be devastating if ignored.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) tells doctors to warn of possible "long-term problems" and to contact their doctor if "not feeling quite right," but does not mention hor-

monal problems or PTHP symptoms.

It is now, until October 4, consulting on fresh guidelines which leave that advice unchanged.

Mrs Lane said: "They have left the discharge advice exactly as it was before.

"They say it is alarming to

people but I would much rather be alarmed than lose my son.

"How is this an adequate warning for a devastating condition that may happen after the patient will make any connection with a past head injury?"

Mrs Lane has the backing of many leading figures in the med-

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ical and healthcare world.

Her letter to the British Medical Association at the end of last year calling for the change was signed by 50 consultants and charity workers.

The Sunday Times' health columnist Dr Mark Porter recently wrote an article for the paper highlighting the huge numbers of undiagnosed PTHP sufferers.

He wrote: "Every expert I have spoken to agrees on one thing: the few hundred or so cases that are officially diagnosed in the UK every year are just a fraction of the number affected by the condition.

"When I say fraction I really do mean the tiniest of proportions, with some estimates suggesting that there are currently as many as a half a million people in the UK with some degree of PTHP."

He also noted that while the Army routinely screens injured soldiers for the condition, the NHS does not.

■ To sign Mrs Lane's petition visit [ipetitions.com/petition/protect-head-injury-survivors](http://ipetitions.com/petition/protect-head-injury-survivors).

### IN BRIEF

#### Bus depot day: access all areas

**CROYDON:** Fans of 1970s sitcom *On The Buses* may find that an event this weekend is right up their street.

The Croydon Bus Depot in Beddington Lane is holding an open day on Saturday where visitors will be offered access to the inner sanctum of the town's Metrobus operation.

Expect tours of the site, static vehicle displays, cab photos, and even the chance to go for a ride on a bus while it goes through the wash.

There will also be a bouncy castle, refreshments, live music, transport-related stalls and Metrobus merchandise stalls.

Admission is free and the event runs from 10am until 4pm.

#### Cut out of car

**COULSDON:** A man was taken to hospital with serious injuries after a car crash on Sunday.

The 42-year-old had to be cut free from his car after the smash around 6pm at the junction of Coulsdon Road and Hartley Down.

Paramedics rushed to the scene to reports of a crash involving two cars.

The 42-year-old was treated on site for facial injuries and back and chest pain. He was then taken to St George's Hospital.

#### Bank 'n' grind

**CROYDON:** Barclays employees will swap suits for aprons at the World's Biggest Coffee Morning next week.

Staff of the North End branch are participating in the annual Macmillan Cancer Support fundraiser on September 27 and hope to raise £500 by selling cups of tea and slices of cake.