



Royal College of  
General Practitioners

**Dr Sue Rendel BA MB BS FRCGP MRCP DRCOG**  
**Assistant to the Honorary Secretary of Council**

Peter J Bedford  
Senior Coroner for Berkshire  
Reading Town Hall  
Blagrove Street  
Reading, Berkshire  
RG1 1QH  
DX 40124 Reading Castle Street

19 January 2018

Dear Mr Bedford,

**Re: Mrs Violet Levine Nelson, Regulation 28 Report**

**Reference: PJB/NELSON, VL**

Thank you for asking the Royal College of General Practitioners to make a response to your report about Mrs Violet Levine Nelson, who sadly died suddenly following the Rupture of a Thoracic Aortic Aneurysm.

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is the largest membership organisation in the United Kingdom solely for GPs. It aims to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and to act as the 'voice' of GPs on issues concerned with education; training; research; and clinical standards. Founded in 1952, the RCGP has just over 50,000 members who are committed to improving patient care, developing their own skills and promoting general practice as a discipline.

You highlight three matters of concern in your report.

I agree with the comment you make in the second, i.e. that GPs are in general, unlikely to be aware that the presence of a supra-renal aortic aneurysm should raise concerns about the possibility of a thoracic aortic aneurysm and that further investigation and referral would be appropriate.

When GPs request investigations such as ultrasounds, they rely upon the report from their secondary care colleagues to make recommendations about the findings and in particular suggestions for further investigation and referral. Many GPs do not have access to the related images and so the accuracy and fullness of the report is their usual guide as to future management.

Dr Matt Hoghton, Medical Director of the Clinical Innovation and Research Centre in the RCGP understands that the cut-offs for referrals for the size of a suprarenal aortic abdominal aneurysm (AAA) after ultrasound is usually determined locally in the hospital between the local radiology department and the local vascular surgeons. It may be worth asking the Royal Berkshire Hospital Reading for their protocol during the time period the ultrasound scans took

place. The national AAA screening programme in England, screens for AAA in men during the year they turn 65 years but is not offered to women.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/abdominal-aortic-aneurysm-screening/>

Their local office for Reading is AAA, Admin Office, John Radcliffe Hospital, Headley Way, Headington Oxford Tel: 01865 572636

You ask in your covering letter for suggestions about other organisations who might be able to influence change in this area and would suggest that you may wish to consider contacting:

1. Royal College of Radiologists,  
63 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3JW
2. Royal College of Surgeons of England  
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PE
3. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)  
10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BU  
NICE have a guideline in development: Abdominal aortic aneurysm: diagnosis and management [GID-CGWAVE0769] with an expected publication date of 07 November 2018."

Yours Sincerely



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Assistant to the Honorary Secretary of RCGP Council