

Summary: Lessons From Mid Staffs – Good Journalism, Bad Healthcare

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- 'Mid Staffordshire' is now a by-word for failure in the NHS. Hundreds suffered appalling neglect. People did die needlessly as a result.
- There was no single exclusive story but a series which exposed the state of care at the hospital, the local paper's amongst them.
- Staff tried to raise the alarm but were bullied.
- Inquiries and reports about what went wrong have caused a shift in the NHS so that quality is on equal footing with finance and more nurses have been recruited.
- But the risk of further failings remains through financial pressure, and the role of good health journalism remains critical.
- There are bad forms of health journalism that could lead to worse care for patients.
- Health journalists have an extra responsibility because they are covering people at their most vulnerable.
- News organisations need to recognise this but often do not. Journalists need to take responsibility to point this out.
- The future of health journalism lies in analysis, offering depth beyond what people can find out for themselves via social media etc.
- Education and specialism are important and valuable, and will be a loss if they disappear.