

The Real Issue was not the Complaint

A man complained that there was a problem with the equipment used for IV fluids given to him during and after surgery, stating that as a result he experienced considerable pain in his arm after discharge from hospital. It was determined that the matter would be referred to conciliation, so that the complainant could be given an explanation about the problems with equipment, and staff from the hospital could understand the effect the equipment failure had on the complainant.

During the conciliation, it became apparent that the reason for the man's complaint to the

HCSCC was that he had heard staff talking soon after his surgery, and believed that there had been an incident during his surgery which might have been catastrophic for him. As a result, he had not been able to sleep, and had become quite anxious since his discharge from hospital. While the issue with the pain in his arm was a real one, it was not the main cause of concern for him.

The anaesthetist explained that there was an incident, but that it was not unusual and not dangerous. However, it was agreed that a checklist used by surgeons to discuss what happened during surgery would be updated to ensure that any anaesthetic incident would be discussed with the patient after surgery so that other people would not have this experience. An apology was also provided to the complainant and accepted by him.