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### **Verdict on death in dentist's chair**

An inquest jury has returned a verdict of death by misadventure on a five-year-old boy who died in a dentist's chair.

Bradley Legge died from a heart attack as a result of the anaesthetic used by the dentist and complications which followed the cardiac arrest, the jury at Portsmouth Coroner's Court decided.

Following the verdict, coroner James Kenroy said he would be reporting the outcome of the inquest to the relevant authority to prevent similar deaths in future.

A rare muscle disorder - muscle myopathy - was accepted by members of the jury as a contributory factor in the death.

They had been told that standard medical procedures were not followed by anaesthetist Dr Peter Armstrong after Bradley, of Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, appeared to develop a violent allergic reaction to dental anaesthetic.

### **Attempts to save Bradley**

But coroner Mr Kenroy said after the verdict was returned: "Dr Armstrong worked desperately hard to save his patient and may well have done all he knew. It is not the function of this inquest to judge the appropriateness of what he did in his attempts to save Bradley."

Bradley was put under general anaesthetic while two of his milk teeth were extracted at privately owned Outram Road Dental Anaesthetic Clinic in Southsea, Portsmouth, last September.

But he suffered a heart attack and brain damage, lapsed into a coma and died a month later.

Dr Armstrong said he had given him adrenaline, heart massage and oxygen and had begun trying to shock the heart back into working.

But Hampshire ambulance service paramedic Jayne Peters said the clinic had not followed procedures for children used by paramedics .

Dr Armstrong said that, after Bradley's collapse, he had followed guidelines set out by the UK Resuscitation Council.

Consultant anaesthetist Alan Aitkenhead said Bradley had been given doses of adrenalin at five times the normal level but he added: "I believe that it is possible to exclude causes which would indicate a lack of care on the part of Dr Armstrong."

### **The truth**

Speaking after the inquest, Bradley's mother Nikki Legge said: "I am relieved the inquest is over. I believe the evidence that came out establishes the truth of what happened at the dental clinic, but there are still unanswered questions.

"I am very concerned about the use of general anaesthetic at dental clinics - it should only be given in hospital.

"I consider there is clear evidence that Bradley could and should have survived. Evidence was given that he was treated as an adult rather than a child both with regard to the use of drugs and the heart defibrillator."

She said greater control was needed over treatment in dental surgeries and called for an independent inquiry into the clinic and the events surrounding Bradley's death. She will be pursuing a claim in the civil courts.

In a statement issued after today's hearing, Dr Armstrong said: "In the 18 years I have practised as an anaesthetist, I have never been involved in an incident of this nature, and the experience has both shocked and saddened me.

"Once again, I would like to extend my sympathy to Bradley's family and friends."