

## Patient Statement for Falls Prevention Clinic

Some weeks ago, my wife and I became concerned because my wife was experiencing a period of lack of balance. Over a preceding period of **very many years** she had had a lot of falls for which **no reason was established**. Fortunately, **no bones had been broken, but I was wondering whether that sort of luck could continue**.

A consultation with a GP resulted in my wife failing each of **3 tests of balance**. **A CT Scan was then arranged, but this showed no reason for the problem**. Our GP then referred my wife to the **Falls Prevention Clinic**, until then we had no idea such a clinic existed.

The first visit to the clinic was made after visits to our home by the **Occupational Therapist and Pharmacist**. At the clinic, there were consultations with the **Geriatrician, Dr. Frank Nicklason, and the Physiotherapist**.

Dr. Frank's consultation was lengthy and he told us that he considered the balance problem was being caused by the **side effects of a number of the prescribed tablets**. These were prescribed for **angina, high blood pressure and severe sleeping problems**.

Dr. Frank decided to replace those tablets with other prescriptions which would not have those side effects. The changed regime in respect of the sleeping tablets had rather **drastic results**. For the first two nights my wife had absolutely no sleep at all; consequently she was suffering greatly from lack of sleep. At that stage, I felt the cure was just too difficult and suggested to my wife that she revert to the previous arrangements. However, she said she was **determined to go through with the changed regime**.

In the following week there was not much sleep – a couple of nights yielded only 2 hours and the best was 4 hours.

During this time, Dr. Frank **contacted us by telephone** and that discussion revealed that there had been a misunderstanding and that my wife had cut out the sleeping tablets in one move, whereas staged withdrawals should have applied.

When Dr. Frank next saw my wife, 10 days after the initial consultation, he repeated a balance test which my wife had failed at the previous visit. **This time she passed**.

We found each member of the clinic's staff, with whom we had contact, very kind and helpful. We are grateful to them all.

**Dr. Frank Nicklason, October 2002**