

Cartwright Report condemns cancer treatment

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Timeline

The report was triggered by the publication in *Metro* magazine of 'An Unfortunate Experiment', an article by Sandra Coney and Phillida Bunkle which alleged that cervical cancer patients at Auckland's National Women's Hospital were receiving inadequate treatment.

Dr Herbert Green of the hospital's cervical cancer clinic had become convinced that abnormal cells in the cervix did not necessarily progress to invasive cancer. Coney and Bunkle claimed that in 1966 he began monitoring patients without treating them or informing them that they were taking part in an experiment. A number of women developed cervical cancer, and some of them died.

The article caused public outrage and the government established a Committee of Inquiry, headed by Judge Silvia Cartwright, to investigate allegations of patient mistreatment.

The resulting 'Cartwright Report' condemned the experiment and proposed radical new measures to ensure patients' rights, including the establishment of a National Cervical Screening Programme. A number of women received settlement packages.

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