

**Care of rest home resident who
sustained injuries from an unwitnessed fall
(06HDC12434, 21 August 2007)**

Registered nurse ~ Rest home ~ Older people's health ~ Fracture ~ Ethical and professional standards ~ Inadequate care ~ Rights 4(1), 4(2)

A woman complained about the care provided to her elderly mother, a resident in a rest home, after she sustained severe injuries thought to be the result of two unwitnessed falls. As a result of these injuries the woman was no longer able to assist with personal cares or to mobilise independently, and required hospital care.

The woman was noted to have deteriorated, but nothing was done until two days later when the on-call GP was called. The registered nurse involved advised that she did not call the GP earlier as she did not consider the patient to be exhibiting any evidence of significant injuries, and thought she was suffering from back pain, which she had complained of in the past. Following the GP assessment the patient was admitted to hospital and found to have multiple fractures.

It was held that the registered nurse failed to comply with professional and ethical standards, breaching Right 4(2), and that the rest home failed to ensure that adequate care was provided, breaching Right 4(1).