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LTC Update

Don't Take Elderly Care For Granted

February 22, 2016, by Josef Lauri, San Gwann

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Spring 2016

I read with interest the article 'Elderly care... by developers' by Astrid Vella (February 15).

All those whose loved ones are in a home for the elderly should also look out for serious mis-management of very basic health care in these homes. My father had been living in what we thought was a very reputable home for a year.

On December 27, 2015 he was a healthy 94-year-old. He even went out with my sister to a restaurant and he could eat by himself without any help.

Although we noticed him becoming a little more confused than usual and less steady on his feet, we put his confusion down to some initial signs of dementia. We did not realize that these were signs of dehydration.

He started getting worse. Two doctors were called in to see him. On both occasions they said that he was dehydrated, but in spite of these warning signs, his fluid intake was not monitored, with very grave repercussions. After about a week, he was admitted as an emergency case to Mater Dei hospital. After a battery of tests, the doctors unanimously concluded that he was a perfectly healthy 94-year-old who, however, was suffering from severe dehydration.

For a few days he was fighting for his life. Now he is in a rehabilitation hospital, slowly getting better. But he will never be anything like what he was the previous month.

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The quality of life for his remaining months or years with us has been irrevocably taken away from him.

I am writing this in the hope that whoever has an elderly relative in care does not take anything for granted, no matter how good the reputation of the home may be where their relative is residing.

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