

ant thing is the expectation of the patient. Nor is it of any importance how this expectation is induced, whether from the patient's own observation, statements of medical men or otherwise—the essential matter is its existence, however induced.

This expectation, impression and conviction that death is impending, may be manifested by the patient in any of several ways—he may say so in so many words or he may indicate his conviction of impending death by changing countenance and appearing distressed or terrified when he is informed of it, etc. He may do this without any words of apprehension; and still make his conviction clear.

It is of great importance for the ends of justice that the attending physician should not only make the state of the patient unmistakably clear to him, but also that he should, if possible, obtain unmistakable evidence that the patient was convinced and without hope.

Where there is ample time, the Police and Crown authorities may be communicated with to take the Declaration; but no chances should be taken whereby the evidence may be lost.

The doctor should satisfy himself that the patient understand what is said to and by him. The Declaration may be elicited by questions put to the patient. Everything said by him in respect of the circumstances causing death should be noted, even if it may seem to be immaterial.

It is very desirable that the Declaration be reduced to writing; where circumstances permit, it should be read over to the patient; and if he is able, he should be got to sign it; witnesses present should also sign as witnesses. Magistrates sometimes examine a patient on oath and the examination is signed by both—this is permissible.

It is, however, not absolutely necessary that the Declaration be reduced to writing at all. If circumstances do not permit of a written Declaration, an oral Declaration should be obtained. In that case, all present should take full notes of what is said, so that the memory may be refreshed (if necessary) when evidence is to be given of the Declaration. (Such notes are, however, not evidence in themselves.)

If the Declaration be reduced to writing and circumstances prevent its being signed by the patient, the witnesses should sign it after making certain that it is accurate—the absence of the signature of witnesses is not fatal to the Declaration but such signature is always advisable.