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**SCOTLAND**on**SUNDAY**

## Head injury a hidden killer, warns mother



*Joanna Lane who's son Christopher committed suicide*

By NATALIE WALKER

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A MOTHER whose son committed suicide is leading a campaign to have doctors in Scotland recognise a form of depression suffered by up to a third of people who experience a head injury. Joanna Lane, a former teacher, is calling for the illness – post-traumatic hypopituitarism (PTHP) – to be included when the NHS in Scotland publishes its new clinical practice guidelines early next year. Supporters of the campaign want to see PTHP officially recognised to ensure doctors are made aware of the condition, which has been linked to depression, chronic fatigue and infertility. Lane believes her son Chris developed the condition and that it led to him taking his life at the age of 31, after suffering depression. Her campaign has won the support of Alastair Campbell, the former Labour spin doctor, as well as politicians and doctors. She is also backed by her brother-in-law, the scientist Sir David Lane, who is best known for his pioneering work at Dundee University on the cancer suppressor gene known as the "guardian of the genome".



Lane said: "There is substantial research showing this illness exists and how seriously it can affect people, that is why it is baffling that it is not even acknowledged by the NHS. The only way to describe it is intentional neglect. It is like it continues to be airbrushed out of official medical guidelines. It is scandalous, and it is flouting the patient's right."

Lane has written to the Scottish Government asking for PTHP to be included in the revised NHS guidelines being put together by the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN), which produces clinical practice guidelines that are widely used in UK hospitals. An updated version of the guidelines for Scotland is due to be published in March.

The illness, caused by damage to the [pituitary gland](#), has never been officially recognised in the UK but is commonly diagnosed in a number of countries, including the US, Germany and Italy.

Lane's son fractured his skull when he fell out of a tree when he was seven. He later developed depression and discovered he was impotent. Both health issues have been attributed to his having PTHP although it was never officially diagnosed.

Lane, who lives in Surrey, said: "What is so frustrating is that PTHP is fairly easy to diagnose and treat. There will be many hundreds of people with undiagnosed PTHP in Scotland who should have a chance, at least, to be told what is wrong with them and get the treatment that would change many of their lives."