

- [Craven Herald »](#)

- [News »](#)

NEWS [RSS FEED](#) [SEND YOUR NEWS, PICTURES & VIDEOS](#)

TV drama answers call to highlight head injury risks

10:10am Saturday 14th May 2011 in [News](#)



TRAGEDY: Chris Lane, who died aged 31

When IT specialist Christopher Lane committed suicide in 2008, his distraught mother wanted answers.

Joanna Lane was desperate to know what had driven her 31-year-old son to take his own life – and now she is on a quest to raise awareness of the condition which, she believes, lay behind his death.

She says Chris, who lived in Skipton for five years and worked for Skipton Building Society, was a happy, lively, intelligent boy.

At the age of seven, he fell out of a tree and fractured his skull. He recovered well, grew up, and went to university – but his behaviour became unpredictable.

It was only after his death his mother discovered he was impotent and had probably been suffering from hypopituitarism – a hidden brain damage that can destroy your ability to conceive a baby, and can rob you of your energy, relationships and happiness.

Her internet research also revealed that a head injury – even a slight one – can make you three or four times more likely to commit suicide and that one in four head-injury survivors suffer damage to their pituitary gland and the effects may not show until decades later.

"We also found, bitterest of all, you could treat people with hormone therapy. Chris could have been saved if we'd known," says Joanna, who lives in Surrey.

In an attempt to raise awareness, she wrote to Gillian Richmond, scriptwriter for BBC's *Holby City*, and next week's episode of the hospital drama, *Step On Up*, will spotlight the condition.

Joanna said: "Since 2008, when Chris died, I have worked to raise awareness, sending hundreds of e-mails to hospitals, doctors, rehab centres, politicians and patient safety organisations.

"Head-injury patients need screening for pituitary damage, and patients should be warned of the risk in their hospital discharge letters.

"I've had a few successes – NHS Direct and other medical databases give the information now, as do charities like Headway and the Pituitary Foundation. But the government hasn't been helpful – the head injury guidelines still don't mention the risk. Research suggests around 30,000 undiagnosed people 'come on the market' each year."

* *Holby City* is on BBC1 on Tuesday at 8pm.