234850 - He gave the patient medicine to help him sleep and he died; what must he do?

the question

I am a doctor in the intensive care department. One day I had a patient who was seventy years old; he was having difficulty breathing, his heart muscle was weak and he had had a number of previous strokes. I treated him, and his condition was gradually improving. One day he complained about not being able to sleep, so I gave him some medicine to help him sleep, in a very small dose that would not affect his heart or have any side effects, but unexpectedly he unfortunately passed away approximately half an hour later. I do not know whether the cause was the medicine or something else. What must I do? Please note that I do not know his family or how to reach them, if I have to do that.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I put this question to our shaykh, ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan al-Barraak (may Allah preserve him) and he said:

Reference should be made concerning that to specialists. The issue should be put to a medical committee, and if they determine that what this doctor did was wrong, then he must offer expiation and pay the diyah (blood money) to the male heirs of the deceased.

But if they say that the doctor did not do anything but what was required of him, and there was no error in what he did, then he does not have to do anything. End quote.

You have to refer this matter to the administration to take the necessary steps to form a specialist committee that can examine the matter, as is usual in such cases.

Please see the answer to question no. 175020

And Allah knows best.