



**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE: Coroner Judgement of Inquiry and Inquest  
Inquisition and Recommendations**

Department of Justice, Legal Services  
Yukon Coroners Service  
206C Lowe Street  
PO Box 2703 (J-10A)  
Y1A 2C6  
Whitehorse, YT  
Tel.: 867-667-5317 Fax.: 867-456-6826

**Yukon Coroners Service: Judgement of Inquiry into the death of:** Irene Joyce Korte

**Coroner Investigative File No.:** 4520201454

Name: Irene Joyce Korte Date of Birth: 1955/07/05 Date of Death: 2015/02/22

YYYY/MM/DD

YYYY/MM/DD

Address: Mendenhall, Yukon

Street Address

Province/Territory

Postal Code

Ethnic Origin: First Nation

Location of Death: Mendenhall, Yukon

**Cause of Death**

Acute Subdural Haemorrhage due to Blunt Force Head Injury

**Manner of Death**

Accidental

**Autopsy Findings**

An autopsy was performed at Vancouver General Hospital on February 26, 2015. The autopsy revealed recent bruising to the body, including a dense bruise to the right part of the scalp, and a left sided black eye. There were also some healing scabbed injuries noted.

There was a large volume of collected blood around the right side of the brain. There was patchy minor bleeding underlying the membrane that covers the surface of the brain. The brain was significantly swollen and there were changes observed which is consistent with bleeding within the brain stem and evidence of further brain damage due to impaired cerebral blood flow and/or oxygenation. The lungs were congested and the liver was fatty and minimally inflamed.

**Toxicological Findings**

Toxicology analysis revealed moderate level of intoxication with alcohol. There was amitriptyline and nortriptyline at the low end of the range where lethal effects have been noted. There was recent use of cannabis and sub-therapeutic levels of the sedative antihistamine agent diphenhydramine detected.

### Circumstances of Death

On December 10, 2014 and February 4, 2015, Ms. Korte received a prescription for amitriptyline. The prescription in December 2014 was for a total of 20mg (2 x 10mg tabs) of medication at night. The February 2015 prescription was for 50mg (1 x 50mg tab) at night. In the days prior to her death, Ms. Korte suffered several falls and was drowsy. She had troubles walking, using the restroom, and getting dressed. She was confused and was using a chair in order to keep her upright while walking. She was described as being "delusional" and "hearing voices." Ms. Korte told a neighbor that she had fallen and hit her face. Around the same time, Ms. Korte also had another fall in which she struck the back of her head. In another incident, Ms. Korte rolled/fell off a sofa and had to be helped off the floor. On February 21, 2015 at approximately 09:00hrs, Ms. Korte went to the Emergency Department of Whitehorse General Hospital. Ms. Korte was found to be hypertensive and was suffering from a drug reaction to amitriptyline. Ms. Korte was found unresponsive in her home on the afternoon of February 22, 2015 and could not be revived. She was pronounced deceased.

### Significant Factors/Conclusions

In the days before her death, Ms. Korte was experiencing symptoms of excessive drowsiness, confusion, falls, hallucinations, anxiety, she could not walk without the support of a chair, and she required help to use the restroom and dress herself.

The acute toxic effects of alcohol and amitriptyline rendered Ms. Korte more susceptible to traumatic insult.

Ms. Korte had several falls causing her to strike her head. When Ms. Korte fell and struck her head she unknowingly sustained an acute subdural hemorrhage – bleeding around the brain.

### Recommendations

No recommendations

*Macdonald*  
Signature, Chief Coroner

*Jutan*  
Province/Territory

*July 28/15*  
Date

Print

Save

Clear