

Patient was 'a suicide risk'

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By Bret Christian

Phillip Walsham was considered at serious risk of suicide when he was taken to Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital in 1992, a casualty doctor told the Supreme Court.

Dr Roger Alan Swift told the court he had seen Mr Walsham with his mother at the hospital after Mr Walsham had been taken to the hospital by police.

After a family argument, he had been found by a friend on scaffolding at Warwick railway station, tying a hose around his neck.

"It was serious in that it indicated a risk he may repeat the act, or a similar act, in the time after the incident," Dr Swift said.

He said he could not make a full assessment as to whether Mr Walsham had an ongoing mental illness at that time.

"More likely it was an impulsive act as the result of a family argument," he said.

"The mechanism he chose was violent and traumatic.

"It could result in him very quickly dying and not being able to change his mind.

"He made a quick decision and could very quickly die from that.

"For that reason he was a serious risk."

Dr Swift referred Mr Walsham to the hospital's psychiatric registrar.

