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## Paramedic died after taking tablets she bought over the internet to help her sleep

By [Andy Dolan](#)

UPDATED: 13:36 EST, 20 May 2011

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A paramedic who bought sleeping pills over the internet to help her cope with her demanding shifts was found dead 48 hours later, an inquest heard yesterday.

Lorna Lambden's body was discovered with an empty glass of wine at her side.

The 27-year-old, who worked 12-hour shifts at the London Ambulance Service, had taken a number of the tablets, which she had obtained through a foreign website.



**Sorely missed: Paramedic Lorna Lambden (centre) was described as being happy and helpful**

The drugs were anti-depressants which are sometimes used as sleeping pills in low doses. Too much can stop the heart.

After a coroner recorded an accident verdict, Miss Lambden's family warned of the dangers of buying medicines over the internet, without prescription.

Her mother, Sandra, a retired accident and emergency sister, said: 'Lorna worked long shifts, from early mornings to late nights.'

'But she loved her job. She was especially proud when she delivered a baby on Christmas Day. Everybody loved Lorna, she would light up a room.'

'It's terrible that these drugs are so freely available online and people can buy them without seeing any warnings about the harm they can do.'

Miss Lambden's father, Roy, told Hertfordshire coroner's court that his daughter had 'found her vocation' with the ambulance service and loved 'dashing across London to someone's assistance'.

In a statement, he described her as someone who would go 'full pelt' into everything and 'smiled at everyone she encountered'.

However the inquest in Hatfield heard that Miss Lambden often had trouble sleeping.

Her family last spoke to her on December 15, when she was described as being in a 'jolly mood'.

She was studying for a Masters degree at the University of Hertfordshire and had met student friends for coffee that day.

She had also received tickets for a skiing trip and posted on her Facebook page: 'Snow, yippee.'



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**Dedicated: Lorna's father Roy said his daughter had 'found her vocation' with the ambulance service and loved 'dashing across London to someone's assistance'**

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The court heard that Miss Lambden's family did not think it unusual when they did not hear from her over the next two days as she would often be out of touch because of her shift pattern.

It was only when she failed to make contact on the day of her grandfather's funeral that concerns were raised.

Her police officer boyfriend, William McDonald, found her body on December 17 at her home in Harpenden, with her favourite film, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, playing.

In the flat were several blister packs of sleeping pills, which she had not been prescribed. Toxicology tests showed a fatal level in her blood.

Coroner Edward Thomas said: 'Amitriptyline can stop the heart and I think that is likely here. Lorna would not have known it had happened. It would not have been like a heart attack.'

Dr Laurence Buckman, chairman of the BMA's GP committee, said: 'You should always get your drugs on prescription and go to a pharmacist, who will tell you about the side effects and correct dose.'