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Alastair Hamilton, a 47-year-old chemistry teacher, ended his life at Pegasos, a Swiss assisted suicide clinic, in August 2022. His family was unaware of his plans; they believed he was visiting a friend in Paris. Alastair paid over £10,000 for the procedure and his death was kept secret from his family.

Alastair's mother, Judith Hamilton, 81, visited the Pegasos clinic in Basel, Switzerland, where her son had died. The building is located next to an asphalt factory. The family discovered his death only after police examined his bank statements and found several transactions to Pegasos. Initially, the clinic refused to provide information about Alastair's remains, citing legal recommendations. Two months later, the family received his ashes by mail.

The Hamilton family was distressed by the clinic's lack of transparency and compassion. Alastair's brother, Toby, criticized Pegasos for allowing someone who was not terminally ill to end their life without informing their next of kin. Swiss law permits assisted suicide since 1942, provided the motives are not selfish and the person is of sound mind, regardless of having a terminal illness.

Alastair had been suffering from low moods, unexplained weight loss, and fatigue since 2022. Despite numerous private health checks, doctors could not diagnose a specific condition. Before his departure, Alastair bid a heartfelt farewell to his mother, which did not initially raise concern. The family only realized something was wrong when he stopped responding to their calls and messages.

Following his disappearance, the Hamilton family worked with the Metropolitan Police, the Foreign Office, and Interpol to trace Alastair’s actions. Ultimately, Pegasos confirmed his death but delayed details about the circumstances and withheld his personal belongings and goodbye letters.

The family has spoken out about their experience amidst ongoing discussions about assisted dying laws in the UK, where it remains illegal. Pegasos, operated by Ruedi Habegger, states on its website that it approves death requests for individuals over 18, without requiring them to be ill.

The clinic later expressed regret for their communication failures with the Hamilton family and maintained they adhere to Swiss laws and revised guidelines on assisted dying.