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Ms Susan Williams
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Date: 14 March 2003

IN CONFIDENCE

Dear Ms Williams

DEATHS FROM HYPONATRAEMIA IN CHILDREN

I attach for your information a newspaper article and a letter from Mr Leckey, coroner for Greater Belfast, both relating to deaths in children which may have been linked to hyponatraemia.

A recent inquest held on a child, Raychel Ferguson, who died in 2001 as a result of hyponatraemia received considerable media attention and this publicity appears to have focused attention on other deaths in which hyponatraemia may have played a role.

Following the death of Raychel Ferguson I worked with clinical colleagues to produce short guidance on the Prevention of Hyponatraemia in Children, in the form of an A2 poster for use in clinical rooms. I attach an A4 copy for your information.

I would appreciate your opinion on whether this may be an issue that the National Patient Safety Agency would like to explore in greater detail.

I would be happy to discuss this with you further and to provide additional information if needed.

Yours sincerely

DR MIRIAM McCARTHY
Senior Medical Officer