

Trevor Birney

From: Jo.McGinley [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 October 2004 16:38
To: Trevor Birney
Subject: query
Importance: High

Trevor,

I refer you to the e-mail that you sent through to my colleague, Christine Stewart, on April 23 – when you asked this question. I would also refer you to Christine's response on May 17, when she said:

'We are aware of two cases in which the coroner has suggested dilutional hyponatraemia as a contributory cause of death. The coroner's office could possibly elaborate as I am bound by patient confidentiality.'

I hope that this answers your latest query.

Jo McGinley
Media and PR manager
Corporate Communication
Ground Floor, East Wing
The Royal Hospitals
Grosvenor Road
Belfast
BT12 6BA

Tel: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Trevor Birney [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 October 2004 11:55
To: Jo.McGinley
Subject: RE: Death of Lucy Crawford

Jo,

Can I stress that the information in relation to the death of a child at the RVH in 1997 has come from the Medical Director at Altnagelvin Trust.

He says that it was his counterpart at the Royal who told him about the death.

Given this, it may be better if I phrase the question: **How many children who've suffered hyponatraemia have died at the RBHSC since January, 1995?**

I look forward to hearing from you by end of play today (6pm).

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Trevor Birney

Editor, Current Affairs
Ulster Television

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-----Original Message-----

From: Jo.McGinley [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: 07 October 2004 08:08
To: Trevor Birney
Subject: Death of Lucy Crawford
Importance: High

Trevor,

Our staff have checked and based on the information that you provided we are not aware of any death in 1997 relevant to your enquiries. I have also forwarded to them the e-mail in which you state that you intend to claim the Royal misled the Coroner. I am waiting further instruction from them on this.

Could I also ask that all your enquiries about the activities of this Trust and its staff are directed through the press office in the normal way.

Jo McGinley
Media and PR manager
Corporate Communication
Ground Floor, East Wing
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Tel: [REDACTED]

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UTV

08/10/04

069B-012-043

Reply from Royal below
Trevor Birney
Editor, Current Affairs
Ulster Television

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-----Original Message-----

From: Christine Stewart [REDACTED]

Sent: 17 May 2004 15:30

To: Trevor Birney

Subject:

Trevor

In reply to your e mail of May 5

Our consultants have declined the offer to talk further about the Lucy Crawford case, feeling that they said everything relevant at the inquest.

However regarding your queries about the local post mortem, I have some information which may be of use.

It would be normal procedure for the Royal to involve a paediatric pathologist in this type of case (sudden death of a child).

As to why the localised post mortem recorded a different cause of death to the coroner's findings – the localised post mortem recorded the condition which being present led to the death.

Using the example of meningitis; one person could say meningitis, another multi organ failure, and another heart attack; and they would all be right to some degree. Guidance from pathologists is that the cause of death is the condition without which the person would not have died, meningitis in this example.

Regarding the number of deaths from dilutional hyponatraemia – We are aware of two cases in which the coroner has suggested dilutional hyponatraemia as a cause of death. The coroners office could possibly elaborate as I am bound by patient confidentiality.

regards

Christine

Below is request to RVH and reply.

Trevor Birney
Editor, Current Affairs
Ulster Television

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-----Original Message-----

From: Christine Stewart [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 April 2004 15:54
To: Trevor Birney
Subject: RE: UTV Insight - Lucy Crawford case.

Trevor

Got your e mail. I have asked Dr Hanrahan for guidance on the issues you raised. I'll get back to you ASAP

Regards

Christine

-----Original Message-----

From: Trevor Birney [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 April 2004 11:45
To: Christine Stewart
Subject: UTV Insight - Lucy Crawford case.

Christine,

Further to my recent conversation with you in relation to the death of Lucy Crawford, I want to request a briefing from the RVH.

In April, 2000, Lucy was transferred to the Royal from the Erne Hospital. She was effectively dead when she left Enniskillen and only survived a few hours before the life support machine was turned off. At the recent inquest into her death, Coroner John Leckey found that Lucy had died from cerebral oedema caused by dilutional hyponatraemia. However, a "localised" post mortem carried out by Dr. Dennis O'Hara at the Royal found that she had died of gastroenteritis - which she had been suffering from when admitted to the Erne. Nowhere in his report did he mention hyponatraemia.

Some of those involved in the case are now pointing to this failure to find the exact cause of death as something of a concern.

However, as in the past, the Royal will have a completely different perspective on this. We have already identified issues surrounding Lucy's notes which were not delivered to the Hospital for Sick Children with Lucy but only arrived by fax several hours later.

I would like to speak to someone in relation to the following areas:

1. What was Lucy's condition when she arrived at the Royal? How critical was the failure of the Erne to send Lucy's notes with her? 2. Why was the post mortem carried out by a paediatric pathologist at the Royal? 3. What is the Royal's understanding of the exact cause of death? 4. How many cases of dilutional hyponatraemia in children has the Royal seen in the past 10 years? We are aware of the death of a children called Adam Strain in 1995 and of another case involving a 14-year-old girl who almost died from hyponatraemia and later took a case against the hospital.

Dr. Donncha Hanrahan, Consultant paediatric anaesthetist, was involved in Lucy's treatment and gave critical evidence at the inquest and may be the person who would be most appropriate. At this stage, we would welcome an off-the-record conversation. We do not envisage requesting a formal interview.

You can give me a call on [REDACTED] at any time to go over this.

Cheers.

Trevor.

Trevor Birney
Editor, Current Affairs
Ulster Television

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