



30th October 2003

Dear Mr Leckey

I was talking to you on the phone last week regarding my grandson's treatment at Craigavon hospital. The following notes and pieces of information were discussed by Jo and myself after the statements to the C.I.D. were made.

Jo and I had remarked to each other how fast the fluid was introduced via the drip. However Jo and I knew nothing about the delicate balance of rehydration and it didn't occur to us to mention it to staff as we assumed that Conor was in capable hands. (We had not even heard of the case of Rachel Ferguson until after Conor's death)

No catheter or urine bag was used to measure Conor's fluid output, which we have since been told is normal practise.

Jo and I are almost 100% sure that no more blood samples were taken after the one taken on admission to the A and E. Conor's weight was asked about much later in the day. No rectal valium or other medication was given to calm Conor's seizures which were progressively getting more intensive in strength and duration.

It was very apparent that ^{there} seemed to be no-one in charge, but quite a few nurses, some of whom did not have an adequate grasp of english.

One particular nurse who I assume was from the Philippines was repeatedly told about Conor's regular medication, at least four to five times still wrote the incorrect dosage on his chart and was finally corrected by a male nurse.

We were constantly being re-assured that Conor was not seriously ill and would be seen by a consultant the following day.

When Dr Murdoch arrived he also said that there was nothing wrong with Conor apart from slight dehydration and a urine infection. He said it would be enough to make even a grown man feel quite ill. Dr Murdoch's efforts at taking an ECG of Conor and subsequent attempts to take his blood pressure did not fill us with any confidence whatsoever. Jo and I both vehemently requested that Conor be transferred to the RVH. Dr Murdoch then made a very long phone call which seemed to last approximately 20 minutes to a colleague, who he said he/she was happy with the treatment Conor was receiving and that, s all that Conor did need.

Dr Murdoch had told Jo that the Medical Admissions Unit was very well staffed in comparison to the rest of the hospital.

After Conor,s admission to the RVH, we were asked on two occasions about the degree of diarrhoea suffered by Conor during his illness. Conor had not had diarrhoea at all. We assume now that was relevant to rehydration.

Apart from the two urine samples taken, Conor did not pass urine the rest of the day. We noticed this as he was wearing only underpants and they were not wet and he did not need them changed.

Jo wishes me to add the following incident which disturbed her regarding this particular doctor's attitude to people with cerebral palsy. On arrival at the MAU, a junior doctor asked Jo various questions regarding our address, type of house she lived in and who lived there etc. She then said to Jo "we have a lot of CPs in with urine infections, its because their wee brains dont work properly and they don't know when to drink when they are thirsty". Jo told her that this certainly wasn't the case and wondered how on earth she came out of medical

school with such misinformation and ignorance.

After Conor went into what was his final seizure, Jo rushed out once again calling for help. At this time, I was beside Conor and I noticed the moment when he stopped breathing. At this time there was no doctor present and it was only when I screamed "he's stopped breathing, He's stopped breathing" that the doctors reappeared. The details following this series of catastrophies are in the original statements.

Whatever caused Conor's seizures, which were totally untypical of any he had had before, they were NOT ADDRESSED AT ALL AT ANY TIME and the seizures, rash and blotchy patches and swelling of his face did not seem to cause anyone apart from Jo and myself any concern.

Reading over these notes again and with the curse of hindsight we feel such unbearable impotence. If we had had an inkling of the potential dangers and the final outcome or had medical experience ourselves, perhaps this story might have had a different ending. However, common sense prevails and we keep reminding ourselves that Conor was in a Hospital thus we relinquished our responsibility and put our trust into the hands of those we thought were experts.

Yours sincerely

Judy Mitchell

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R.M.

Ps. A female paediatrician came in at the start of Conor's final seizures and her tone was noted by Jo's partner who was also present at the time when she said to Doctor Murdoch that "THIS CHILD IS IN SEIZURE". Doctor Murdoch seemed quite surprised at her statement which was said in what appeared to be the tone of "isn't it obvious, could you not tell"? Doctor Murdoch replied as if in shock "Not tonic clonic"?!