

The Irish News  
10/06/04

# Family hand report on son's death to lawyers

THE family of a 15-year-old disabled boy who died in hospital have handed the coroner's report to their lawyers, Belfast Coroner John Leckey had concluded that Conor Mitchell from Lurgan suffered a number of seizures in the hours before lapsing into an irreversible coma at Craigavon Area Hospital last May.

Mr Leckey in his report found no evidence that hospital staff witnessed Conor suffering a series of 10 to 12 seizures described by his mother and grandmother. But he said that the parents and close family of the teenager would have been well placed to interpret his body movements.

His mother, Joanna, said her legal team would consider Mr Leckey's findings. "I think the coroner made two salient points - that Conor was having seizures and that the family should have been listened to. These points are being considered."

"There just seemed to be a lack of urgency with Conor and I knew something was dreadfully wrong. But I'm only his mother," she said.

Conor, who had cerebral palsy, died in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children last May, four days after being admitted to Craigavon Area Hospital. His family have claimed he experienced between 10 and 12 violent episodes in the afternoon of his admission and they pleaded for nurses to get medical help.

Mr Leckey, presenting his findings on the seventh day of the inquest, said he had attached due weight to the evidence of three paediatric experts whose view was that the parents of disabled children have considerable information which is of help to medical staff.

"There is no evidence that enables me to conclude that any member of the medical or nursing staff witnessed the series of 10 to 12 seizures each of two to three minutes' duration and of increasing severity and frequency, the increasingly vivid intermittent rash on the cheeks, noises described by members of the family as having occurred during that afternoon period," he concluded.

Mr Leckey said he hoped his investigation had been rigorous and thorough. "Having said that, I am not sure that all the questions asked have been answered fully, but I don't think it's possible that all the questions asked could be answered fully," he said.

Extending his sympathy to the family, the coroner said: "He was a much loved boy, son and grandson and I am satisfied that the Mitchell family did know Conor intimately and were in a very special position so far as interpreting his body movements and bearing in mind the medical conditions from which he suffered, his body movements would tend to be different from a child not disabled."

Mr Leckey concluded that the teenager had died of brain-stem failure caused by a cerebral oedema. The seizures had been a contributory factor in the swelling which led to brain death. The coroner said there was no evidence of any viral infection contributing to his death and he concluded that fluid management at Craigavon Area Hospital had been acceptable.

By Edward Sumner, a consultant paediatric anaesthetist commissioned by Mr Leckey to report on the cause of death, said the findings were fair and balanced. He believed they supported his conclusion that Conor would have been better being nursed in a paediatric environment. "As a paediatric doctor myself, we are used to dealing with the family and the parents as a single unit and I honestly think that we understand that the mother is the person who knows most about her child," he said.

"Conor was undoubtedly having seizures throughout the afternoon and I think we need to ask why was this unrecognised."

The Belfast Telegraph

09/06/04

# Inquest finds staff did not see seizures

By Marie Foy

THERE was no evidence to indicate that medical staff saw a disabled teenager suffer up to 12 seizures after he had been admitted to hospital, a coroner said today.

Greater Belfast coroner John Leckey was giving his findings at the inquest into the death of 15-year-old Conor Mitchell, from Lisburn.

Conor suffered from a chronic form of cerebral palsy and was very disabled, although he was intelligent and had passed his 11 Plus.

Family members were too upset to talk to reporters after the hearing.

Conor had been unwell for around 10 days and was taken to Craigavon Area hospital on May 8 last year with a suspected viral illness.

His family said he expe-

## Coroner rules on tragic case of 15-year-old

rienced 10 to 12 seizures increasing in intensity during that afternoon, but medical staff said they had not witnessed them.

That evening, he suffered two more and lapsed into unconsciousness. He was transferred to the Royal Victoria Hospital the next day but died three days later.

The cause of death was given as brainstem failure with hypoxia, ischaemia, seizures and infarction as underlying causes.

His family had expressed concerns with the care Conor had received at Craigavon.

Mr Leckey said that a doctor in the accident and

emergency department had noticed Conor's arm jerking and considered it was a typical seizure activity but had not put it in the medical notes. Later a nurse noticed spasms or muscular twitches but did not regard them as a seizure.

"On the balance of probabilities, I am satisfied that there was some incidence of seizure activity in the course of the afternoon," the coroner said.

However, there was no evidence, Mr Leckey said, for him to conclude that staff had seen the afternoon seizures.

Expressing sympathy with the family Mr Leckey said: "It has certainly come out very clearly he was a much loved boy, son and grandson."

He conceded that some questions raised may not have been answered fully.



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## Seizures 'not witnessed'

There is no evidence that hospital staff witnessed a disabled County Armagh boy having a series of epileptic seizures in the hours before he fell into a coma, a coroner has said.



The boy was initially taken to Craigavon Area Hospital

John Leckey, Coroner for Greater Belfast, said he believed that on the balance of probabilities 15-year-old Conor Mitchell suffered a number of seizures before a fit that proved to be fatal.

Conor, a cerebral palsy victim from Lurgan, County Armagh, died in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children last May four days after being admitted to Craigavon Area Hospital.

His family have claimed he experienced between 10 and 12 violent episodes in the afternoon of his admission to Craigavon and they pleaded for nurses to get medical help.

Mr Leckey, presented his findings on Wednesday, the seventh day of the inquest.

He said he had attached due weight to the evidence of three paediatric experts whose view was that the parents of disabled children have considerable information which is of help to medical staff.

But he said there was "no evidence" to enable him to conclude that any member of the medical or nursing staff witnessed the seizures "each of two to three minutes' duration and of increasing severity and frequency, the increasingly vivid intermittent rash or the choking noises described by members of the family."

**" I am not sure that all the questions asked have been answered fully but I don't think it's possible that all the questions asked could be answered fully "**

John Leckey

Mr Leckey said that he hoped his investigation had been rigorous and thorough.

He added: "Having said that I am not sure that all the questions asked have been answered fully but I don't think it's possible that all the questions asked could be answered fully."

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"In his judgement Leckey said he was in evidence of three

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Extending his sympathy to the family, the coroner said: "He was a much loved boy, son and grandson."

He added: "I am satisfied that the Mitchell family did know Conor intimately and were in a very special position so far as interpreting his body movements and bearing in mind the medical conditions from which he suffered his body movements would tend to be different from a child not disabled."


Mr Leckey concluded that the teenager had died of brain-stem failure caused by a cerebral oedema.


The seizures had been a contributory factor in the swelling which led to brain death.

Mr Leckey said there was no evidence of any viral infection contributing to his death and he concluded that fluid management at Craigavon Area Hospital had been acceptable.

Conor's family have said he lapsed into a coma after suffering the second of two epileptic seizures in the presence of a paediatric registrar.

Tests at the Royal confirmed that Conor was brain dead and the family agreed to his support systems being switched off. He died on 12 May, 2003.

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The Irish News  
09/06/04

# Inquest told of disabled boy's death

A DISABLED boy, who died of brain stem failure, had suffered a series of seizures while under the care of hospital staff, a Belfast inquest was told yesterday.

Conor Mitchell (15) from Lurgan, Co. Armagh, died in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children last May, after being transferred from Craigavon Area Hospital.

Dr Edward Sumner, who was commissioned by Belfast Coroner John Leckey to examine the case, said after hearing evidence given by medical and nursing witnesses he had not changed his original conclusions.

The London-based consultant paediatric anaesthetist had reported that "on the balance of probabilities" Conor had major seizures in the afternoon he was admitted to Craigavon.

"I tried to make my report objective. It was in no way to throw blame in any direction," Dr Sumner said.

"The evidence I have heard from the Craigavon medical and nursing staff hasn't made any difference to my opinion that what was happening during the afternoon was seizure activity."

He echoed the views given by two specialists from the Royal that Conor, who was born with cerebral palsy, would have been better off being treated in a paediatric ward instead of the medical admissions unit.

"I think it was regrettable that Conor wasn't nursed in a paediatric environment as he was small for his age, weighing only 22kg," he said.

"I think that people trained in paediatrics have a higher index of suspicion for what might be seizure activity," he said.

The boy's family have been critical of the treatment he received after being admitted to Craigavon on May 8 2003.

They claim he suffered between 10 and 12 violent epileptic seizures in the hours before he finally lost consciousness.

Conor lapsed into a coma after suffering the second of two epileptic seizures in the presence of a paediatric registrar.

Tests at the Royal confirmed that Conor was brain dead and the family agreed to his support systems being switched off.

He died on May 12 2003.

Dr Michael Smith, a consultant paediatrician based at Craigavon, told the inquest yesterday that the treatment Conor had received would have been no different if he had been admitted to the paediatric unit.

Dr Smith said he was satisfied that Conor had received appropriate treatment in the medical admissions unit.

"Based on the clinical situation and the information I had, the care would not have been different," he said.

Dr Marion Williams, the paediatric registrar who examined Conor, said she was satisfied that he had been properly cared for.

The Newsletter  
09/06/04

## Seizures in hospital killed disabled boy – inquest

A DISABLED boy who died of brain stem failure had suffered a series of seizures while under the care of hospital staff, a Belfast inquest was told yesterday.

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By **GARY KELLY**

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He echoed the views given by two specialists from the Royal that Conor, born with cerebral palsy, would have been better off being treated in a paediatric ward instead of the medical admissions unit.

The boy's family have been critical of the treatment he received after being admitted to Craigavon on May 8, 2003. They claim he suffered between 10 and 12 violent epileptic seizures in the hours before he lost consciousness. Conor lapsed into a coma after suffering the second of two epileptic seizures in the presence of a paediatric registrar.

Tests at the Royal confirmed Conor was brain dead and the family agreed to his support systems being switched off. He died on May 13, 2003.

Dr Michael Smith, a consultant paediatrician based at Craigavon, told the inquest yesterday that the treatment Conor had received would have been no different if he had been admitted to the paediatric unit.

Dr Marion Williams, the paediatric registrar who examined Conor, said she was satisfied that he had been properly cared for.

"I remember thinking at the time that he was receiving appropriate management, everything was being done."

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### Inquest into NI boy's death

A disabled boy, who died of brain stem failure, had suffered a series of seizures while under the care of hospital staff, a Belfast inquest was told today.

By: Press Association



Conor Mitchell, 15, from Lurgan, Co Armagh, died in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children last May, after being transferred from Craigavon Area Hospital.

Dr Edward Sumner, who was commissioned by Belfast Coroner John Lckey to examine the case, said after hearing evidence given by medical and nursing witnesses he had not changed his original conclusions.

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He told the inquest: "I tried to make my report objective. It was in no way to throw blame in any direction.

"The evidence I have heard from the Craigavon medical and nursing staff hasn't made any difference to my opinion that what was happening during the afternoon was seizure activity."

He echoed the views given by two specialists from the Royal that Conor, who was born with cerebral palsy, would have been better off being treated in a paediatric ward instead of the medical admissions unit.

"I think it was regrettable that Conor wasn't nursed in a paediatric environment as he was small for his age, weighing only 22kg," he told the inquest.

He added: "I think that people trained in paediatrics have a higher index of suspicion for what might be seizure activity."

The boy's family have been critical of the treatment he received after being admitted to Craigavon on May 8, 2003.

They claim he suffered between 10 and 12 violent epileptic seizures in the hours before he finally lost consciousness.

Conor lapsed into a coma after suffering the second of two epileptic

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seizures in the presence of a paediatric registrar.

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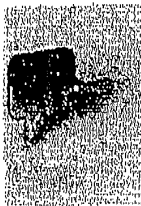
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"Based on the clinical situation and the information I had, the care would not have been different," he said.


Dr Marion Williams, the paediatric registrar who examined Conor, said she was satisfied that he had been properly cared for.

"I remember thinking at the time that he was receiving appropriate management, everything was being done."

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The Irish News  
08/06/04

# Children's ward 'would have been preferable'

By Gary Kelly  
PA News

A DISABLED boy who died after suffering two major epileptic seizures and lapsing into a coma, would have been better off being treated in a children's ward, a Belfast inquest was told yesterday.

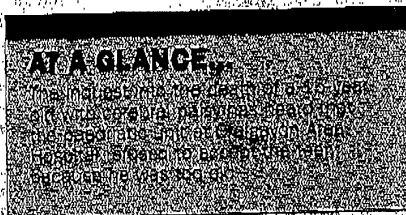
Conor Mitchell (15) from Lurgan, Co. Armagh, who suffered from cerebral palsy, died in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children in May last year, four days after being admitted to Craigavon Area Hospital.

The inquest heard that the paediatric unit at Craigavon had refused to accept Conor because he was too old so he was taken to the medical admissions unit.

But a medical expert from the Royal claimed it would have been preferable if Conor, who was the size and weight of a seven-year-old child, had been nursed in a paediatric environment.

Dr Elaine Hicks, a consultant paediatric neurologist, said that she would normally look after patients until they have reached the age of 16.

She said: "It is extraordinarily difficult to cope with children of this age group and I think it's particularly difficult when administrative guidelines cut across what one might feel might have been the ideal."



## AT A GLANCE

The inquest into the death of a severely disabled 15-year-old boy, Conor Mitchell, who died after suffering two major epileptic seizures and lapsing into a coma, would have been better off being treated in a children's ward, a Belfast inquest was told yesterday.

"I think with a small, slim, severely disabled 15-year-old, we are more geared towards that type of patient than many of the adult wards."

Dr Janice Bothwell, a paediatric consultant, who examined Conor after he was transferred to the Royal, said she thought it would have been helpful if he had been seen by a child specialist at Craigavon.

She said: "I think that paediatricians are more used to dealing with children with cerebral palsy and I think it would have been helpful to have their opinion."

The inquest has been told that he was seen by a consultant paediatrician around 8pm on May 8 2003 more than nine hours after being admitted to Craigavon.

While the consultant was examining him, he suffered two major seizures and fell into a state of unconsciousness from which he

never recovered.

The teenager's mother and grandmother have both been critical of the treatment he received at Craigavon.

They claimed he suffered between 10 and 12 violent seizures before he was seen by the consultant and they pleaded with staff to get medical help.

However staff at Craigavon have told the inquest that they did not witness any major seizures.

John Leakey, the coroner for Greater Belfast, asked Dr Hicks if it would have been easy for staff in a non-specialist environment to have missed Conor's seizures.

Dr Hicks replied: "It is very easy to miss something that is brief and only occurring intermittently."

Dr Suzie Budd, who examined the teenager in Craigavon A&E before he was transferred to the Medical Admissions Unit, said she had contacted the paediatrics ward to request he be taken there.

But she was told that he could not be accepted because of his age.

"I spent some time discussing this with the paediatric team and also the bed manager," she added.

Asked if she had mentioned Conor's weight and general size, she replied: "Yes I did."

The Newsletter  
08/06/04

# Disabled boy denied children's ward place

By GARY KELLY

A DISABLED boy who died after suffering two major epileptic seizures and lapsing into a coma, would have been better off being treated in a children's ward, a Belfast inquest was told yesterday.

Conor Mitchell, 15, from Lurgan, Co Armagh, who suffered from cerebral palsy, died in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children in May last year, four days after being admitted to Craigavon Area Hospital.

The inquest heard that the paediatric unit at Craigavon had refused to accept Conor because he was too old, so he was taken to the medical admissions unit.

But a medical expert from the Royal claimed it would have been preferable if Conor, who was the size and weight of a seven-year-old child, had been nursed in a paediatric environment.

Dr Elaine Hicks, a consultant paediatric neurologist, said that she would normally look after patients until they have reached the age of 16.

She said: "It is extraordinarily difficult to cope with children of this age group and I think it's particularly difficult when administrative guidelines cut across what one might feel might have been the ideal.

"I think with a small, slim, severely disabled 15-year-old, we are more geared towards that type of patient than many of the adult wards."

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She said: "I think that paediatricians are more used to dealing with children with cerebral palsy and I think it would have been helpful to have their opinion."

The inquest has been told that Conor was seen by a consultant paediatrician around 8pm on May 8, 2003, more than

## Unit considered teenager too old, inquest told

nine hours after being admitted to Craigavon.

While the consultant was examining him, he suffered two major seizures and fell into a state of unconsciousness from which he never recovered.

The teenager's mother and grandmother have both been critical of the treatment he received at Craigavon.

They claimed he suffered between 10 and 12 violent seizures before he was seen by the consultant and they pleaded with staff to get medical help.

However, staff at Craigavon have told the inquest that they did not witness any major seizures.

John Leckey, the Coroner for Greater Belfast, asked Dr Hicks if it would have been easy for staff in a non-specialist environment to have missed Conor's seizures.

Dr Hicks replied: "It is very easy to miss something that is brief and only occurring intermittently."

Dr Suzie Budd, who examined the teenager in Craigavon A&E before he was transferred to the medical admissions unit, said she had contacted the paediatrics ward to request he be taken there.

But she was told that he could not be accepted because of his age.

"I spent some time discussing this with the paediatric team and also the bed manager," she added.

Asked if she had mentioned Conor's weight and general size, she replied: "Yes I did."

The hearing continues.

The Belfast Telegraph

08/06/04

# Cerebral palsy teen was treated properly

By Marie Foy

A FIFTEEN-year-old boy with cerebral palsy had been receiving appropriate treatment at Craigavon Area Hospital as he suffered two serious seizures, a paediatrician told an inquest today.

The inquest heard that after suffering the seizures Lurgan teenager Conor Mitchell lapsed into unconsciousness and was transferred to the intensive care unit.

He was later taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital for Sick Children where he died four days later on May 12 last year.

Conor's family claim that he had suffered 10-12 seizures between the time of his admission at Craigavon around lunchtime and 8pm.

They have expressed concerns that his seizures weren't recognised.

Dr Marion Williams said she was asked to see Conor on the evening of his admission to Craigavon to see if there was any further treatment he should be receiving. However,

## Doctor tells inquest of seeing seizures

she said that the call had not been urgent.

Dr Williams said that although she saw two seizures she had not witnessed the violent body movement which Conor's mother had described.

She said Conor suffered two stiffening episodes – the first was very brief and lasted a few seconds, on the second occasion he stiffened again for about ten seconds but did not recover.

Dr Williams also said the family had not mentioned that Conor had been having seizures when she spoke to them.

"I remember thinking at the time that he was receiving

appropriate management and everything was being done that could be done."

Consultant paediatrician Michael Smith said that when a person suffered a chronic condition in childhood it was desirable for paediatric care to continue on until early adulthood.

However, in this case, Conor had not been under paediatric care for a number of years and it would have been no advantage to him to have been admitted to a paediatric ward at Craigavon.

Asked by Robert Millar, barrister for Craigavon Area hospital, if Conor would have received any different treatment in the paediatric ward, Dr Smith replied: "Based on the clinical situation and with the information I had, the care would not have been different".

The medical expert said that the cause of death had been cerebral odema but he did not know if the cause of this condition would be determined.

## Skipper is fined over collision

By Jonathan McCambridge  
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A KIRCUBBEN fishing boat skipper who sank a clam dredger because he claimed he was blinded by a low sun has been fined in court, it emerged today.

Phillip McMullan of Round Island Park, Sanctuary Cove, Kircubben, admitted negligence over the collision between his fishing boat Aspire and the clam dredger Mariscos, off Burial Island.

Two fishermen aboard the Mariscos had to be rescued following the collision north of Portavogie on December 18, 2002.

The Maritime Accident and Investigation Board launched a probe into the incident and McMullan appeared at Newtownards Magistrates Court this week to face six charges of negligence by failing to use appropriate means to stop and of failing to maintain a lookout resulting in a collision.

Six of the charges were dropped after he pleaded guilty to failing to ascertain that risk of collision existed. He was fined £500 and ordered to pay £500 costs.

McMullan told the court that the low winter sun had affected his ability to see the Mariscos and claimed his radar picture had become confused by echoes.

The Aspire was returning to Portavogie when it struck the Mariscos in December 2002.

The Mariscos immediately capsized, momentarily trapping two crewmen in the upturned wheelhouse. They both managed to swim free and floated to the surface.

McMullan was not available for comment today.

# Doctor rejects seizures finding

By Gary Kelly

A DOCTOR has rejected the opinion of a leading consultant paediatrician who found that a disabled boy suffered a series of major seizures before lapsing into a coma.

Dr Andrew Murdock told a Belfast inquest he did not accept that 15-year-old Conor Mitchell had a number of epileptic attacks in the hours before he fell into unconsciousness.

Conor, from Lurgan, Co Armagh, who suffered from cerebral palsy, died in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children in May last year, four days after being admitted to Craigavon Area Hospital.

His family claim that he suffered between 10 and 12 seizures between the time of his admission and 8pm and that they had urged nurses to get medical help.

Dr Murdock, a medical registrar based in Craigavon, said he had found no evidence of seizures after examining the stricken boy at 6.30pm on the day of his admission.

Two hours later, while he was being examined by Consultant Paediatrician

## Inquest told boy (15) lapsed into a coma

Dr Marion Williams, Conor suffered the second of two major seizures and lapsed into a coma. He never recovered consciousness and died in the Royal on May 12, 2003.

Dr Murdock told the inquest: "I didn't see anything in my examination that suggests to me that there was Grand Mal seizures occurring. When there was a seizure diagnosed at 8.20pm, treatment was instantly instigated."

Tommy McKillop, a barrister for the Mitchell family, said that Dr Edward Sumner, a Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist, concluded that "on the balance of probabilities" Conor suffered seizures during the afternoon.

Disagreeing with the findings, Dr Murdock said he trusted the professionalism of the medical staff in the Medical Admissions Unit, who had not witnessed violent seizures.

The doctor told the inquest that after Conor's

death, he spoke to a number of senior colleagues to see if he could have missed anything during his examination.

"Their conclusion was that my management had been appropriate. As to the cause of death, there were a lot of theories such as a sudden epileptic attack which can cause sudden death.

"When the post mortem report came back I was hoping that there would be a conclusive answer," he added.

Earlier, Staff Nurse Barbara Wilkinson confirmed the family had been very anxious to speak to a doctor about their concerns that Conor was suffering from spasms and had a rash.

The nurse, who was present when Dr Murdock carried out the 6.30pm examination, said: "I had no problem with Dr Murdock's attitude or the way he examined Conor."

The inquest was adjourned.

KIELTY

Patrick Kielty

By Sean O'Driscoll

BELFAST CRIME CORRESPONDENT  
Patrick Kielty is in the US, at a production of Endemol's

Kielty's show depends on audiences show 'Deal later this y "It all de how their it, but thei

The Belfast Telegraph

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MONDAY 24/05/2004 16:35:44

### Inquest into boy's death

A doctor was out of his depth as he tried to cope with a disabled teenage boy who fell unconscious at a hospital in Northern Ireland, an inquest heard today.

By: Press Association

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Ms Joanna Mitchell, from Lurgan, Co Armagh broke down as she revealed she had urged nurses to get medical help for son Conor, who suffered from cerebral palsy.

At one stage she claimed Dr Andrew Murdock fumbled during the emergency at Craigavon Area Hospital a year ago.

She also accused Dr Murdock, the medical registrar, of lying when he claimed he did not witness her son's symptoms before he lapsed into a coma.

Conor, 15, died on March 12, 2003, three days after being transferred to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Giving evidence on the first day of the inquest at Belfast Coroner's Court, Ms Mitchell said her son began to develop seizures after being admitted to Craigavon on March 8:

``He went completely stiff and his body corkscrewed. Each seizure lasted at least two to three minutes. He suffered 10 to 12 seizures between the time of his admission and 8pm,`` she told the inquest.

The court was told that Dr Murdock was called to see the stricken teenager at around 6.30pm.

``Dr Murdock was definitely there fumbling about while Conor was in seizure. Dr Murdock had been there for quite a few of Conor's seizures. He just hadn't diagnosed it,`` she said.

``He was out of his depth. He told me Conor wasn't breathing properly. He told me Conor was missing heartbeats.

``I asked for Conor to be moved to the Royal and I said would somebody who knows what they are doing please come and see my son,`` she added.

Robert Millar, a barrister representing Craigavon Area Hospital said Dr Murdock had denied seeing Conor suffering any seizures.

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Ms Mitchell said she became concerned when her son`s face became puffy and he developed a rash. She said she kept calling for help.

`` For hours I tried to get help. For hours I watched that.

The court heard that Dr Murdock was called after Conor had suffered a very bad seizure.

`` I could see his heart pounding in his chest and he had blood trickling down the side of his mouth. His rash had gone to his arms and chest.

Mr Millar said Dr Murdock had denied seeing a rash.

But she accused the doctor of lying: `` Dr Murdock said he wasn`t worried about the rash because it keeps going away.``

Mr Millar added Dr Murdock would give evidence saying he didn`t see any discharge of brown liquid coming out of his mouth.

Ms Mitchell said: `` He`s lying. He`s lying. He tried to examine Conor`s throat when he was having a seizure and he said he was unco-operative.

`` He wasn`t unco-operative. He was having a seizure and at this stage he was very very ill.``

The court heard that Dr Murdock carried out a full physical examination of Conor when he was admitted to the ward around 1pm.


He then saw him again five and a half hours later being called by a staff nurse.

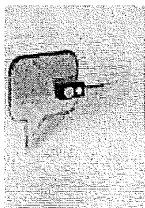
Mrs Mitchell said: `` There was five and a half hours that I called for help. My son was getting worse.

`` I kept getting told Conor was OK, to stop panicking.``


`` I am not making this horror story up. This is what happened to my son. This is what happened to me. This is what is happening every day,`` she told the court.

`` I was seeing my son getting worse and worse and worse and I had a doctor telling me he wasn`t. I couldn`t have requested any more strongly for a more senior doctor,`` she added.

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The Belfast Telegraph  
24<sup>th</sup> May 2004

# Death of teen with cerebral palsy

By Marie Foy

AN inquest opened in Belfast today into the death in hospital of a 15-year-old youth who suffered from cerebral palsy.

Conor Mitchell from Franklyn Park, Burgan, died at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children on May 12 last year. He had earlier been transferred from Craigavon Area Hospital.

Joanna Mitchell said in a statement to the coroner's court that her son had been extremely intelligent, had passed the 11-plus with an A grade and loved speed sports.

The court heard that on April 28 last year Conor had complained about a sore throat. He was prescribed two courses of antibiotic for a vi-

## Inquest told of hospital treatment

ral infection but his mother said these seemed to make him sick.

On May 8 Ms Mitchell said she was concerned that he wasn't getting any better and a doctor suggested Conor should go into hospital for observation. He was taken to the A&E department at Craigavon Area Hospital where he had blood-tests and a drip was inserted.

Mrs Mitchell said she thought the drip was emptying quickly and her mother thought Conor's face was swollen and puffy.

She also said Conor suffered a seizure, but she said she had never seen him have one like this before and it appeared he was in great distress.

Eventually Ms Mitchell said she wasn't satisfied with the treatment Conor was receiving at Craigavon and asked for him to be transferred to the Royal.

She said that Conor continued having seizures while still at Craigavon and after 8pm, shortly after a seizure, his breathing stopped. Her son was placed on a life support machine but did not recover consciousness.

He was taken to the Royal but the family was told that he would probably die and it was agreed he would be taken off the life support machine.

**At hearing.**