

RAYCHEL FERGUSON

ADDENDUM TO REPORT

**Prepared by
Sally G. Ramsay**

1.0 Introduction

I have read the witness statements sent to me and listed at the end of this document. The conclusions in my earlier reports remain the same. However, I have some additional comments as follows:

2.0 Prescription for post-operative intravenous fluids

It appears that there were differing views on which doctors had responsibility for prescribing post-operative fluids. Dr. Makar thought it was the anaesthetists, whereas Drs. Kumar, Jamison and Zafar felt it was the role of the ward paediatrician, confirmed by Dr. Butler who said she was regularly asked to prescribe. Dr. Trainor, Mr. Gilliland and Mr. McCord all stated that the responsibility fell to the surgical team.

I note that Dr. Makar stated that having asked for a 0.5L bag of fluid he was advised that only 1L bags were available. This is surprising for a children's ward. The use of 1L bags can result in infrequent review of intravenous fluids as it can be many hours before the bag needs to be renewed and the prescription re-written.

3.0 Fluid balance

It appears that the nurses were aware that dehydration and electrolyte imbalance can occur with diarrhoea and vomiting but did not relate this to children who vomited post-operatively. There was the assumption that when an infusion is in place the child is getting adequate hydration, regardless of their intake and output.

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In my view this lack of understanding is surprising for a group of registered children's nurses.

4.0 Doctors' visits

I have been unable to identify which nurses accompanied Drs. Devlin and Curran when they visited Raychel. In my experience it was usual for a nurse to accompany a visiting doctor in order to ensure correct information was imparted and to learn the outcome of their assessment. This was particularly important when the doctor concerned was not based on that ward.

5.0 Nurses' qualifications

It is my understanding that some of the nurses caring for Raychel were not registered as children's nurses at the time. Ms Gilchrist gained her diploma in children's nursing in 2003 (WS-053/2 p16)

Ms. Noble qualified as a registered nurse in 1985. It is not known whether this was as an adult nurse or a children's nurse. Although from her witness statement it appears she is still working at Altnagelvin Area Hospital I have been unable to verify her registration on the NMC website. I do not know if she was registered as a children's nurse at the time.

6.0 Mallory Weiss Tear

I note that Staff Nurse Noble attributed Raychel's coffee ground vomit to a Mallory Weiss Tear which she describes as "*tears in the mucosal layer at the junction of the oesophagus and stomach where the presentation is one of haemetemesis after bouts of bleeding.*" (WS 049/2 p8).

Personally I have neither knowledge nor experience of this condition. Whaley and Wong (1995) stated that vomiting can cause complications "*including dehydration and electrolyte disturbances, malnutrition, aspiration and Mallory-Weiss syndrome (small tears in the distal esophageal mucosa).*" The British

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version (1995) edited by Campbell and Glasper made no reference to this condition. However, they did state that a coffee ground or blood streaked appearance in the vomitus may be “*insignificant or of major importance*”.

Bishop et al writing in the Journal of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition in 2000 stated “*Hematemesis after forceful vomiting in children is often attributed to Mallory Weiss Tear. However, this is an uncommon finding with fewer than 25 cases reported.*”

In my opinion, it is surprising that Ms. Noble should have attributed the blood-stained vomitus to an uncommon problem, yet be unaware that vomiting can lead to electrolyte imbalance.

WITNESS STATEMENTS

WS-027-2 Joe Devlin
WS-028-1 Michael Curran
WS-028-2 Michael Curran
WS-038-2 Peter Crean
WS-039 - 2Donncha Hanrahan
WS-048-2 Daphne Patterson
WS-049-2 Ann Noble
WS-050-2 Nurse McGrath
WS-051-2 Michaela McAuley nee Rice
WS-052-2 Avril Roulston
WS-053-2 Sandra Gilchrist
WS-054-2 Fiona Bryce
WS-055-2 Elizabeth Lynch
WS-056-2 E. Millar
WS-022-2 R.Makar
WS-023-2 V. K. Gund
WS-024-2C. Jamieson
WS-025-2 M.H. Zafar
WS-026-2 B. Trainor
WS -030-2 B.McCord
WS-044-2 R. Gilliland

References

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Bishop, Phyllis R.; Nowicki, Michael J.; Parker, Paul H. (2000) Vomiting-Induced Hematemesis in Children: Mallory-Weiss Tear or Prolapse Gastropathy? Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology & Nutrition: April 2000 - Volume 30 - Issue 4 - pp 436-441

Campbell and Glasper (1995) Whaley and Wong's Children's Nursing, Mosby.
Wong D., Whaley & Wong's (1995) Nursing Care of Infants and Children (5th Ed) Mosby: USA

J. Conway

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