

Witness Statement Ref. No. 064/1

INQUIRY INTO HYPONATRAEMIA-RELATED DEATHS

Name: Tracy Power

Title: Dr

Present position and department/employer:

Director of Information & Analysis, Information & Analysis Directorate, DHSSPS (outposted from Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency ("NISRA"), Department of Finance and Personnel ("DFP"))

Length of time in post 6 weeks (from 16 May 2005)

Previous position and department/employer in 1995:

Deputy Principal Statistician, Project Support Analysis Branch, DHSS (outposted from NISRA, DFP)

Previous position and department/employer in 2000:

Principal Statistician, Department of Regional Development (DRD) (outposted from NISRA, DFP)

Previous position and department/employer in 2001:

Principal Statistician, Department of Regional Development (DRD) (outposted from NISRA, DFP)

Membership of Professionals Bodies

None

Particular areas of interest

[Please attach additional sheets if more space is required]

- (i) **Explain how and from whom your Directorate received the information that enabled it to provide the statistics in relation to hyponatraemia related deaths in Northern Ireland.**

No information from the Directorate was provided directly to the Inquiry team. We assisted in requesting data on hyponatraemia-related deaths from the Registrar General's Office (requested by email, 1st February 2005). These data did not come back to the Directorate but went directly to the Inquiry team through the Permanent Secretary's Office.

- (ii) **Give details of what information is collated by your Directorate from hospitals in relation to complications, morbidity and mortality .**

The Patient Administration System ("PAS") operating in hospitals holds the personal details used to administer care to patients during their stay including details on the diagnoses and the procedures undertaken in hospital which will indicate type of illness/morbidity and complications if any, along with other relevant diagnoses. A subset of the data (all records but not all variables) held on PAS is made available to the Department on a monthly basis. Not all information (such as diagnosis or procedures undertaken) is available initially but is made available over subsequent months following the patient's discharge from or death in hospital. Up to 7 diagnoses and 4 procedures can be recorded for each episode of care in hospital. The means by which a patient leaves hospital, including death, is also recorded on Hospital Inpatients System ("HIS").

- (iii) **Explain in detail the steps your Directorate takes in relation to statistics that may be of concern to the attention of the relevant Directorate within the DHSSPS.**

Data on HIS is collected for specific purposes such as providing aggregate data on activity in hospitals at a regional level. It is not used to identify areas of concern as part of a routine management information system. It is a large database containing very detailed data which is interrogated for specific ad-hoc queries. Individual records are rarely, if ever, examined. Whilst some identifiable personal information is held (date of birth and postcode), name and address is not.

Other points you wish to make including additions to any previous Statements, Depositions and or Reports

[Please attach additional sheets if more space is required]

None

THIS STATEMENT IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

Signed: 

Dated: 29th June 2005