

Witness Statement Ref. No.

223/1

NAME OF CHILD: Adam Strain

Name: M Mirakhur

Title: Dr

Present position and institution: Retired (December 2010)

Previous position(s) and institution(s): Consultant Neuropathologist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

[As at the time of the child's death]

Membership of Advisory Panels and Committees:

[Identify by date and title all of those between January 1995-September 2011]

Executive Committee Member, British Neuropathological Society: 2000-2010

Treasurer, British Neuropathological Society: 2006-2010

Other Statements, Depositions and Reports:

[Identify by date and title all of those between January 1995-September 2011]

OFFICIAL USE:

List of previous statements, depositions and reports attached (*):

Ref:

Date:

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANSWERING:

Please attach additional sheets if more space is required. Please identify clearly any document to which you refer or rely upon for your answer. If the document has an Inquiry reference number, e.g. Ref: 049-001-001 which is 'Chart No.1 Old Notes', then please provide that number. If the document does not have such a number then please provide a copy of the document.

I QUERIES ARISING OUT OF YOUR DR ALISON ARMOUR'S AUTOPSY REPORT

With reference to Dr Alison Armour's Autopsy Report dated 29th November 1995 (Ref: 011-010-034), please provide clarification and/or further information in respect of the following:

(1) *"(The brain, spinal cord and histological slides were seen by Dr. M. Mirakhur, Consultant Neuropathologist)"* (Ref: 011-010-040)

(a) In relation to the statement that you saw the *"brain, spinal cord and histological slides"*, please state exactly what you saw, including whether you saw the whole brain, and also:

- (i) When:
- (ii) In what circumstances, and
- (iii) Why you saw them

I do not recall seeing the brain or the spinal cord as the case was not formally referred to me or to the Neuropathology Department. It is possible that Dr Armour may have asked my informal opinion on histological slides.

(b) If you were contacted by Dr. Alison Armour in relation to Adam's *"brain, spinal cord and histological slides"*, then please:

(i) State when, by what means, and for what reason she contacted you. If she contacted you in writing, then please either provide a copy of the document or state what happened to it :

There was no formal referral of the case.

(ii) Describe exactly what you were asked to do, including whether you were asked to examine prepared slides or whether you had to prepare slides yourself

I do not remember but it is possible that Dr Armour may have asked my informal opinion about the histology. I never prepared any slides myself which is done only in the case of a formal referral

(iii) State whether you weighed the brain either in its un-fixed or its fixed state and if so, what was its weight and where is that recorded by you

I do not recall seeing the brain either in the un-fixed or the fixed state. I was not involved in carrying out the autopsy nor was I present at the autopsy.

- (iv) If you were asked to prepare slides, state exactly what material you had to prepare them from, explain how you prepared the slides for examination and state where those slides are now.

I was not involved

- (c) State as fully as you can:

- (i) All the material from Adam that was provided to you

There is no record of any material having been provided to me

- (ii) The information that was given to you, for example (if you had not been involved in the weighing) whether you were provided with Adam's un-fixed and fixed brain weight and if so what figure was given to you and by whom

There is no record of any such information being provided to me

- (iii) The documents provided to you, for example whether you had any of Adam's medical notes and records, or the photographs that were taken sequentially of Adam's brain and if so what you had

There is no record of any document, medical notes or photographs of Adam's brain having been provided to me.

- (d) Please explain, how if at all what was provided to you by way of material, information and documents was factored into both the views that you formed and the conclusions that you communicated to Dr. Alison Armour

As explained above, I did not receive any material, information or documents. I would like to state again that I may have been asked informally by Dr Armour about my view. I cannot recall what I might have said. I have not made any records of what opinion I might have given as the case was never formally referred to me

- (e) State what comments, analysis and/or reports you provided in respect of "the brain, spinal cord and histological slides" that you saw and when you provided them

I never provided any report as I was not requested to do so

- (f) State whether you saw a copy of Dr. Alison Armour's autopsy report and if so please give the date when you did so

I was made aware of this case and I saw Dr Armour's autopsy report for the first time on 28th October 2011 when a copy of the autopsy report was forwarded to me from the Dept of Neuropathology at the Belfast Trust

- (g) Please identify the sections of Dr Alison Armour's autopsy report which are:

- (i) Consistent with your findings
(ii) Inconsistent with your findings

Please explain any such consistencies/ inconsistencies

I have no comments to make for both (i) and (ii) above as I neither saw any material nor made any formal report as none was requested.

- (h) State whether you took any notes from your examination of the slides, and if so, please provide a copy.

I do not recall making any notes

- (2) *"The autopsy revealed gross cerebral oedema. The fixed weight of the brain at postmortem was 1,680gms., the average weight for a boy of this age being 1,300gms and the average weight of a man's brain being 1,450 gms. It was the effects of this massive swelling of the brain which caused his death."* (Ref: 011-010-040)

- (a) What is your experience or knowledge of a child of 4 years and weighing 20.2kg having a post-mortem fixed brain weight of 1,680g

It suggests increased brain weight

- (b) In your experience how likely is it that a post-mortem fixed brain weight can be inaccurate, i.e. what are the likely chances of 1,680g, which is recorded in the Report of Autopsy as the fixed weight of Adam's brain at post-mortem being inaccurate due to uncalibrated scales or human error

Scales are usually reasonably accurate. It is always possible to make a transcription error

- (c) What (if any) is the significance of the weight of Adam's cerebellum having been recorded at 154g and his brain stem at 22g

These weights appear to be proportionate to the overall weight of the brain suggesting a generalised increase in weight of all parts of the brain

- (3) Prior to the date of Adam's autopsy on 29th November 1995, describe in detail your experience of conducting autopsies on children who were 5 years old or younger, including providing the estimated number of such cases and the dates when they took place (if you require any notes to answer this question, then please specify the notes and where they are likely to be located).

I would have conducted such autopsies jointly with paediatric pathologists but I cannot recall the numbers

- (4) If you can recall, please address the following:

- (a) The degree to which there was oedema present, if any, in the:

- (i) Cortex
- (ii) White matter
- (iii) Spinal cord

No, I do not recall having seen any of this material

(b) The degree to which there was hypoxia present, if any

I cannot comment as I cannot recall seeing any material

(c) The degree to which myelinolysis was present, if at all

I cannot comment as I cannot recall seeing any material

(d) If there was anything in the histology of the brain and spinal cord which explains Adam's failure to wake after surgery.

I cannot recall

(5) Describe in detail the education and training you received in fluid management (in particular hyponatraemia) through the following, providing dates and names of the institutions/bodies:

(a) Undergraduate level

I cannot recall as it was a long time back

(b) Postgraduate level

I cannot recall as it was a long time back

(c) Hospital induction programmes

I cannot recall as it was a long time back

(d) Continuous professional development.

Pathologists are not involved in clinical fluid management

II ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

(6) Provide any further points and comments that you wish to make, together with any documents, in relation to:

(a) Record keeping

(b) Lessons learned from Adam's death and its effect on your work

(c) Current 'protocols' and procedures

(d) Any other relevant matter

III DECLARATION OF INTEREST

(7) Confirm that you have completed and signed the attached 'Declaration of Interest'.

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

Signed: Moenakshi Deisakhar

Dated: 18.12.11.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST FORM

TO Solicitor to the Inquiry

FROM

I confirm that I have read the list set out below and have marked on the attached sheet those individuals with whom and (where those individuals represent an organisation, firm or government department) that organisation, firm or government department with which I declare an interest:

I confirm that: (please delete as appropriate)

a) I have disclosed on an attached sheet the existence and particulars of any personal or professional interest that I have had with the following individuals and organisations:

Dr. Maurice Savage
Dr. Mary O'Connor
Dr. Robert Taylor
Dr. Terence Montague
Mr. Patrick Keane
Mr. Stephen Brown

The RBHSC and its administrators and management, including Dr. G. A Murnaghan, Dr. J. Gaston, Dr. S. McKaigue, Dr. P.M. Crean
Belfast Health and Social Services Care Trust formerly the Royal Group of Hospitals and Dental Hospital Health and Social Services Trust

"Professional interest" includes contact through collaboration on research, other investigations and committee work.

My only relationship with the above was only by virtue of working in the same Health Trust.

b) I have no such interest to declare

I acknowledge that I am under a continuing duty to declare any personal or professional interest with those listed above that may arise hereafter.

SIGNED:

Mewaishi Murakawa

DATE :

18.12.11