



HER MAJESTY'S CORONER

DISTRICT OF GREATER BELFAST

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Mr & Mrs Neville Crawford
[REDACTED]

6th March 2003

Dear Mr and Mrs. Crawford,

YOUR LATE DAUGHTER

Recently I received a letter from Mr Stanley Millar who is the Chief Officer of Western Health & Social Services Council. The publicity surrounding a recent inquest I held into the death of a 12 year old girl called Raychel Ferguson who died from the effects of Hyponatraemia led him to query whether the death of Lucy might be from a similar cause.

At the time the death of Lucy was reported to my office our understanding was that a Death Certificate was to be issued giving the cause of death as Gastroenteritis. It was only after receiving the letter from Mr Millar that I became aware that a hospital post-mortem had been carried out by Dr Denis O'Hara and his report indicates that Hyponatraemia might also be the cause of Lucy's death.

I have now taken a decision to investigate fully the circumstances in which Lucy died and if necessary I will hold an inquest. A Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist from Great Ormond Street Hospital London, Dr Edward Sumner, prepared a report for me in connection with the death of Raychel Ferguson and he attended the inquest in Belfast and gave evidence. I have approached him to see if he would be willing to undertake the same task in relation to Lucy and he would be very willing to help. I have sent him a copy of the post-mortem report of Dr O'Hara and he has confirmed to me that his preliminary view is that Lucy did indeed die from the effects of Hyponatraemia. However, before reaching a final view he will wish to examine the

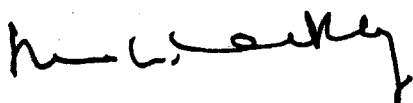
medical records and to consider statements from those involved with Lucy's care and treatment.

I am sure that this letter might come as a shock to you and may cause distress. However, for some reason which is unknown at the present time, children are particularly susceptible to the onset of this condition. If the symptoms are not recognised at an early stage the condition is likely to cause brain injury followed by death.

Once I receive the report of Dr Sumner I will let you have a copy. I am just about to go on three weeks leave and I will not be back in the office until 31st March. I would be happy to meet with you if you felt that would help at this stage. Should you wish to arrange a meeting please telephone my secretary, Mrs Denise Ferguson, who will arrange a suitable appointment.

I would wish to take this opportunity of extending to you and the family circle my very deep sympathy on the death of Lucy.

Yours sincerely



J L LECKEY
HM CORONER FOR GREATER BELFAST