

From Dr M McCarthy
Senior Medical Officer

Date 18 May 2004

1 CMO
2 Mrs Angela Smith

INQUEST ON DEATH OF CONOR MITCHELL

Issue: An inquest on the death of Conor Mitchell, a 15 year old boy who died in hospital on 12 May 2003 is scheduled to commence on 24 May 2004

Timing: Routine

Presentational Issues: Given the high profile of recent inquests into the deaths of Lucy Crawford and Raychel Ferguson, this is likely to attract media attention.

Recommendation: Minister notes that the inquest will be conducted next week by the Belfast Coroner.

Background

Conor Mitchell a 15 year old boy died on 12 May 2003 following admission to Craigavon Area Hospital and subsequent transfer to Paediatric Intensive Care at the RBHSC.

1. Conor, a 15 year old boy with significant physical disability and a history of epilepsy, was admitted to Craigavon Area Hospital on 8th May 2003 with a 10 day history of general malaise and vomiting. At that time he was diagnosed as having a viral infection and treated with fluids and antibiotics.
2. Conor's condition deteriorated, he had a number of seizures and suffered a respiratory arrest. He was transferred to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. His condition failed to improve and he died on 12 May.
3. The post-mortem following Conor's death concluded that the cause of death was cerebral oedema (swelling of the brain) but an underlying cause of was not identified.

Presentational Issues

4. It is likely that the media will be interested in this case and may try to link Conor's death with the deaths of Lucy Crawford and Raychel Ferguson who both died from hyponatraemia. Indeed, I understand that the Crawford and Ferguson families have been in contact with the Mitchell family.
5. Available information however suggests that Conor's death was not related to hyponatraemia.

Recommendation

6. Minister notes an inquest into the death of Conor Mitchell is scheduled to commence on 24 May and is likely to attract media attention.

DR M McCARTHY
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