

Received pursuant to Rule 11

The **ROYAL**
HOSPITALS

MEDICAL DIRECTOR
Dr Michael McBride, FRCP

17 December 2004

Mr & Mrs Roberts
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr and Mrs Roberts

As you will have been advised by Dr Nichola Rooney, I, in my role as Medical Director of the Royal Hospitals Trust, have been closely involved with your recent contact with the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children regarding the death of your beloved daughter Claire in 1996. May I take this opportunity to express my deep regret that the circumstances of Claire's tragic and untimely death have required to be further investigated at this time of year. I can only imagine how difficult this situation has been for you and your family and I am sorry for the added anguish which has undoubtedly been caused.

As you have been informed by Professor Ian Young of the Queen's University Belfast, our medical case note review has suggested that there may have been a care management problem in relation to hyponatraemia and that this may have significantly contributed to Claire's deterioration and death. In such circumstances it is necessary for the Trust to report the death to the Coroner for further investigation. I can now confirm that HM Coroner, Mr John Leckey, has been duly informed. With your permission, we have communicated to the Coroner that you are content with this and he has invited you to contact his office directly. The contact details are as follows.

Mr J Leckey
HM Coroner
Coroner's Office
Courthouse
Old Town Hall Building
80 Victoria Street
Belfast BT1 3FA
Tel: [REDACTED]

OR

Mr J Leckey
HM Coroner
Northern Ireland Court Service
9-15 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7LT
Tel: [REDACTED]

I have enclosed, for your interest, some information pertaining to the role of the Coroner which you may find of some use. I understand you are remaining in contact with the hospital and that Dr Rooney is continuing to co-ordinate responses to a number of questions that you would wish to be answered; with a view to a further meeting in January 2005. I will be kept informed of your ongoing contact and wish to offer any help or support which you might find of use.

/Finally

CR - PSNI

PATRON: HRH The Duchess of Kent

The Royal Victoria Hospital
The Royal Maternity Hospital
The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children
The Dental Hospital

THE ROYAL GROUP OF HOSPITALS AND DENTAL HOSPITAL
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES TRUST

Grosvenor Road, Belfast BT12 6BA Northern Ireland
Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: michael.mcbride@royalhospitals-n-i.nhs.uk



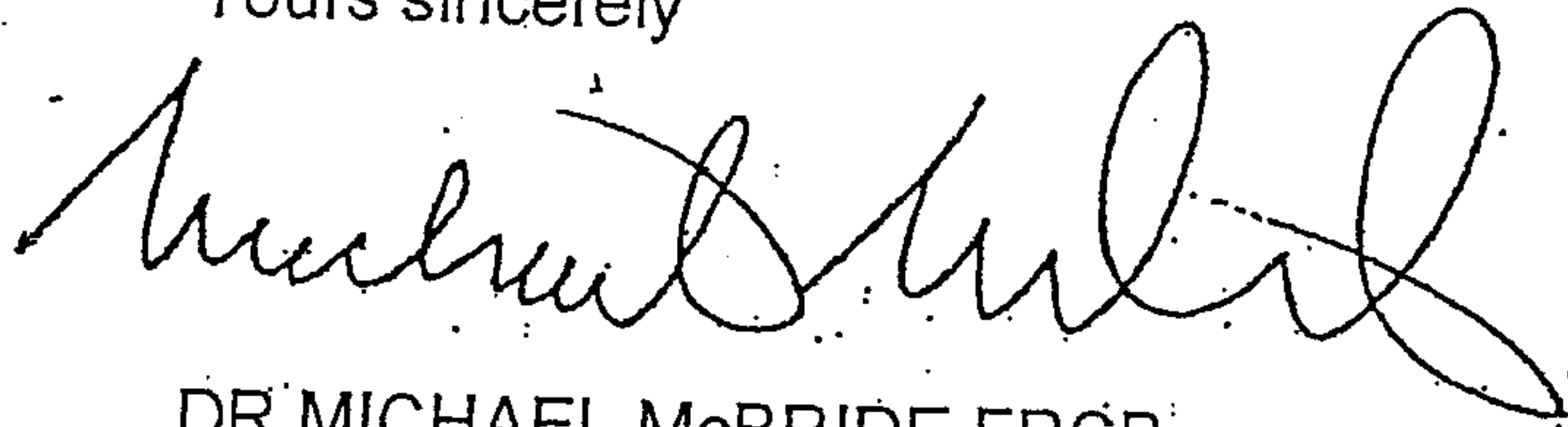
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Health Quality Service

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Finally, may I once again offer my sincerest sympathy to you and your family and hope that you can manage to enjoy a peaceful Christmas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael McBride', written in a cursive style.

DR MICHAEL McBRIDE FRCP
MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Enc

12 January 2005

Mr & Mrs Roberts
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr & Mrs Roberts

Thank you for forwarding your questions which arose from our meeting on 7 December 2004 at the Department of Clinical Psychology, RBHSC. On receipt of your e-mail, the questions were passed for consideration to Dr Heather Steen and Professor Young.

As I discussed with you on the telephone, we appreciate that these questions were sent before you had received the minutes of our meeting and some of your questions may therefore have been answered on reviewing this record. However, as agreed, answers were sought to all of the questions raised in your e-mail.

I know that it has been difficult to fully answer some of your very specific questions as Dr Steen and Professor Young could only reply on the documentation available in the medical chart and their knowledge of the practices of the time. However, I hope that the answers provided will go some way to providing you with the information you require. I have organised the answers provided by Dr Steen and Professor Young in the format of your questions and so the following paragraphs should read in conjunction with your original e-mail (enclosed). I appreciate that reading this information may cause you some further distress and for that I wish to offer my apologies.

1. (a) When Claire arrived in A & E at 8.00 pm on the evening of Tuesday 21 October, the history given to staff was that she had been vomiting in school that day and the GP advised she should be admitted to hospital. Based on this history and Claire's clinical presentation, the admitting Registrar suspected she had possible encephalitis.
- (b) Claire's symptoms were attributed to encephalitis, which was confirmed at post mortem.
- (c) Claire's condition was not under-estimated as she was considered to be very unwell, with a diagnosis of non-convulsive status epilepticus and encephalitis/encephalopathy. Claire consequently received intensive medical intervention.

CR - PSNI