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Fluid given to girl (9) 'no longer prescribed'

By Kieran McDaid

A FLUID given to a young girl who died following surgery at a Londonderry hospital is no longer prescribed for children recovering from operations there, an inquest has heard.

A consultant anaesthetist at Altnagelvin Hospital yesterday told an inquiry into the death of Raychel Ferguson that the solution she received was no longer given to post-operative children.

The inquest earlier heard Raychel could have survived if she had been put on a saline drip after undergoing surgery to remove her appendix.

Belfast Coroner's Court heard that Raychel continually vomited after an operation at Altnagelvin Area Hospital in June 2001.

The child was then rushed to Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital after suffering a seizure and swelling to the brain, and died on June 10.

The inquest heard that Raychel was a normal, healthy child before com-

Inquest told of change in hospital procedures

plaining of stomach pains on her return home from St Patrick's Primary School in Pennyburn, Londonderry, on June 7.

Her mother then took her to hospital from their Benview Estate home in Coshquin where her appendix was removed that night.

Dr Bernie Trainor, a paediatrician who was called to treat Raychel after she suffered a seizure, told the inquest today that surgeons were responsible for prescribing fluids to children after operations.

She said that when she saw Raychel in the early hours of June 9, she looked "very unwell" and had a rash on her face, neck and upper chest which was consistent with vomiting.

Dr Trainor noted that Raychel had vomited up

seven times following the surgery.

The inquest also heard that the two surgeons who attended Raychel, including Dr Ragai Reda Makar who prescribed the fluids which were administered before and after the operation, would not be appearing.

Coroner for Greater Belfast, John Leckey, said Dr Makar had been written a letter and sent a witness summons to attend the hearing but he had no explanation as to why he had not attended.

The court later heard he was on two weeks leave from another hospital where he now works. The other surgeon, Mr Zafar, was excused by the coroner as he is currently sitting exams.

Paul Foster, a barrister acting on behalf of the Ferguson family, instructed by Kelly and Corr solicitors, expressed concern that this could leave a gap in the evidence of the events which led up to Raychel's death.

The inquest was adjourned until tomorrow.