

ENNISKILLEN, CO. FERMANAGH. BT47 6AY. TELEPHONE [REDACTED] FACSIMILE [REDACTED]

7th March 2003-03-07

Dr Jim Kelly
Medical Director
Erne Hospital
Enniskillen

Dear Dr Kelly

Re: Lucy Crawford deceased – Hospital Number 123000.

Further to my conversation with you this morning, this little girl's mother rang me an hour or so later. I made it clear from the outset that I could not under any circumstances discuss her late daughter's condition or treatment, but that she could express her grievances to me so that I could pass them on to you. She was entirely agreeable to this. Her perception of what happened to Lucy is summarised as follows:

As she recalls it, Lucy became unwell on Monday 10th April 2000. She had repeated vomiting and her mother took her to see Dr Graham that afternoon. She was reassured. However, Lucy did not improve – she was drinking but not eating – and she was seen by Dr Kirby, the Westdoc GP on Wednesday 12th. Dr Kirby arranged for Lucy's admission to Ward 3 at Erne Hospital. Lucy initially went to the treatment room, I understand for insertion of a drip. Dr Ashgar was the paediatrician who first saw her, and Mrs Crawford alleges that she was told no blood tests could be done "as the lab was closed". She thinks that it was Dr Ashgar who told her this, but she can't be sure. EMLA (or similar) cream was applied to Lucy's skin and she was given a drink. Dr Ashgar then attempted venous cannulation – eleven times, Mrs Crawford believes – but without success. She does think, however, that he took a blood sample. Mrs Crawford stated that she thought Dr Ashgar was more interested in what he was going to do the following weekend than he was in her daughter's condition, and she feels that the assisting nurse was equally disinterested. Dr O'Donaghue was called to help with the drip. He arrived after 10PM. He gave Lucy a glucose drink and erected an infusion with ease. He then left the ward. Mrs Crawford and Lucy were then taken to a side ward. At 11PM, Mrs Crawford asked Dr Ashgar to look at Lucy as she felt she was very listless. Dr Ashgar did so and said Lucy was "fine". She was not seen again by any doctor till she subsequently suffered a respiratory or cardiac arrest around 3AM on Thursday 13th. Some time after midnight Lucy vomited again and there was an episode of severe diarrhoea. Mrs Crawford had the impression that Lucy was now dying and blames the drip for this, "because of the heaviness and the amount of diarrhoea".

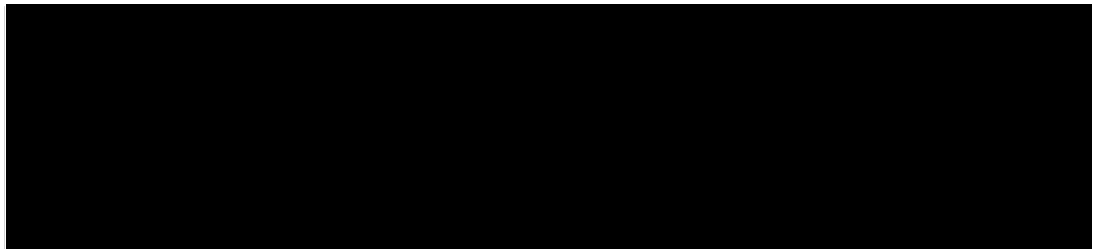
At 3AM, Lucy took three big breaths and then stopped breathing, she became stiff and her pupils dilated. Her mother rang for a nurse but no-one came. She then rushed out into the corridor and found a nurse who came to the room, looked at Lucy, exclaimed "Oh my God" and ran off to summon another nurse who started resuscitation. Pandemonium ensued and she remembers Dr. O'Donaghue returning, and the appearance of Dr. Auterson. She said it was obvious to her that the right equipment was not available. Dr Auterson asked her to leave the room. At 5AM Dr Auterson told her that Lucy needed to go to Belfast but that no anaesthetist

was available to cover the hospital in his absence. She asked if Dr Cody could be contacted and this was refused. She asked for a helicopter transfer and this was also refused.

(Note: Mrs Crawford told me that Dr. Diana Cody later told her that she wished that her husband, Matt had been contacted.)

Around 6.45 am that morning Lucy was sent off to Belfast accompanied by Dr. O'Donaghue and arrived at RVH by 8AM. No parent was permitted to be present in the ambulance. Mrs Crawford didn't see her daughter again till 10AM when she was basically given no hope. The following day, (14th) after brain stem testing, the ventilator was switched off. Mrs Crawford believes Lucy was sent to RVH "under false pretences" in that she believes Lucy was already brain dead. She alleges that some of Lucy's case notes were missing on arrival at RVH. Mrs Crawford has copies of all available notes including a two-and-a-half page document written by a Nurse McManus which summarised the case. She feels that these were purely to "cover" the hospital staff.

Mrs Crawford and the other members of her family believe that the hospital made serious and devastating mistakes. They believe that both medical and nursing staff were negligent. She claims that no-one has given them any truthful information, that everything "has been swept under the carpet". She said that they met with Stanley Millar and that he "led them up the garden path to nowhere". Stanley Miller told her that they would have a reply to their complaint within 20 days but that they are still waiting. They did meet with Dr O'Donaghue, but he brought no notes with him, and told them he couldn't explain Lucy's death.



I think that this sums up well what Mrs Crawford told me today. As I said to you, I have no desire to become embroiled in the dispute, but hope that what I have written may be helpful in reaching some sort of conclusion.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Dr W. Holmes
Consultant Anaesthetist