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Altnagelvin Hospitals Health & Social Services Trust

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Audit Issue 1

Dr T McMurray
Postgraduate Dean
N. I. Medical & Dental Training Agency
5 Annadale Ave
BELFAST BT7 3JH

Dear Dr McMurray

CC Dr F O'Connor ✓

RE: Inquiry into Hyponatraemia Death

Thank you for your request for information regarding evidence about training in the areas of fluid management and in particular hyponatraemia and record keeping in Altnagelvin Hospital.

As you are aware I have been Postgraduate Tutor since April 2004. Unfortunately the previous Postgraduate Tutor, Mr Paul Neely died, and I have discussed this with the tutor prior to that, Dr Philip Gardiner. I have also discussed these issues with Mr Robert Gilliland, regarding for surgical training issues, various doctors who taught on IV fluids and electrolytes and have myself inputted regarding general paediatric training as I was paediatric tutor during that time period.

Whole Hospital Training

From 1995 there have been teaching sessions timetabled each year on fluid balance and electrolyte disturbance within the medical division teaching and training programme. This formal training is delivered during the lunchtime teaching programme and aimed at all PRHO's and all other junior medical staff. This is considered a general hospital education opportunity.

The lectures on fluid balance was given by an anaesthetist and the lecture on abnormal biochemical tests including electrolyte disturbance by our clinical biochemist (ref 1)

Both these lectures would have been very much aimed at adult care.

IN 2002 following our own case of hyponatraemia and cerebral oedema Dr Geoff Nesbitt prepared a talk specifically on this topic and has presented this widely as per his own response to the enquiry (ref 2).

The current junior doctors handbook has a general section on case note recording as well as specific advice on accurate and safe prescribing of drugs and fluids. It specifically mentions default solutions in paediatrics and as importantly the need to seek senior advice if unsure (ref 3).



Medical Paediatric Training

Prior to the late 90's a specific session was allocated to fluids and electrolytes as part of a rolling training package. In the late 90's we introduced a 1-day mini-emergency-paediatric-life-support course for all SHOs and non-APLS trained middle grade. This incorporated a lecture on fluids and electrolyte disturbances and their management based on the then-current APLS guidelines. This is the current training in paediatrics (ref 4).

This was supplemented by the addition of posters detailing our default fluid regime in terms of use of 0.5NSaline/2.5%dextrose solution in 2001 and the formal adoption of regional guidelines in 2002 when they were circularised. To date these guidelines are widely displayed within the unit.

Surgical Directorate Training:

All PRHO's within surgery would have been expected to attend the specific training sessions aforementioned within the whole hospital teaching programme.

In 2002 Dr Nesbitt presented his formal teaching to the senior surgical team and juniors.

Fluids are discussed at departmental induction.

A fluid prescription chart has been agreed with Anaesthetics and Surgical teams, along with guidance on electrolyte monitoring.

I hope this is useful and meets the enquiries requirements. I am aware that other replies from Altnagelvin Trust expand some of these issues in some detail.

Yours sincerely

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Consultant Paediatrician

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