CORONERS INQUISITION Falkland Islands

An inquisition taken for our Sovereign Lady the Queen

At the Coroner's Court in Stanley, Falkland Islands

Held on the 23rd, 24th and 27th days of January 2012
Having been previously adjourned by HM Coroner John Trevaskis on18th March 2011

Before me CARL JOHN GUMSLEY**,** Her Majesty's Coroner for the Falkland Islands

The following matters are found:

1.Name of deceased

Nivek Anthony Roderick McLaren

2. Injury or disease causing death

Ia: Staphylococcus aureus
Ib: Acute bacterial pneumonia
Ic:

II:

3.Time, date, place and circumstances of death

Baby Nivek McLaren was born at approximately 5.30amon 11th March 2011 at the King Edward Memorial Hospital, Stanley.
He was premature. It was initially thought that he was of 36 weeks gestation but later perusal of the written records showed that he was more likely of 34 to 35 weeks gestation.
Nivek was examined after birth and found to be in apparent good health but his prematurity and the fact that it was not known when his mother's waters had broken meant that there were concerns that he might be at particular risk of infection.

There were no protocols in force in the hospital in relation to premature babies.
No specific care plan was devised, agreed or set out anywhere, in respect of Nivek.
No monitoring parameters were agreed, written down anywhere or communicated to any of the staff involved in the care of Nivek.

Consequently all instructions given for the care of Baby Nivek throughout his life were given orally from carer to carer. No formal contemporaneous note of any instructions given were recorded in Nivek's medical notes.

Nivek was monitored closely until some point between 10pm and 11pm on 11th March 2011. During the time between his birth and this time Nivek's care was generally administered or supervised by qualified and experienced midwives.

Blood sugar level readings had been regularly taken. Levels were recorded as being 2.9 at 10am on 11th and 2.8 at 2pm.

After that all blood sugar level test results were lower.
At 6pm the level was recorded as being 1.8. This was not recorded on the Observation Chart but was entered into the narrative notes.
There may have been other tests with results of 2.0 and one with a result as low as 1.1. However if these test took place they were not officially recorded anywhere.

At about 9pm Nivek's parents reported a funny noise being made by him. A nurse was called. Nivek's parents were told that it was most likely that he was dreaming. Nivek was subsequently examined, and temperature and other readings were taken. A blood sugar level test was taken at 10pm on 11th which gave a result of 2.1. This was not entered on the Observation Chart but was entered on the narrative notes.
It is likely that the noises heard by the parents were a sign or symptom of infection.

None of the night staff were trained in specialist neonatal care.

Instructions were given to night staff to make sure that Nivek had fed by about 7am. No further blood sugar level monitoring was considered necessary or advised. No other specific instructions for his care were given.

Consequently the need for enhanced vigilance was not conveyed to, or appreciated by, the night staff.

There were three nurses (two junior staff nurses and one auxiliary nurse) on duty on the night of 11th March 2011. They were required to look after all the patients in the hospital during the night shift. The ward was busier than usual and two or three of the patients required intensive care treatment.

During the night the parents were asked, on a couple of occasions. if they wanted some refreshments. However, apart from that, after about 11pm on the 11th March 2011:

- No further blood sugar monitoring took place took place.
- No tests were carried out on Nivek
- Nivek was not medically examined by any member of staff.
- No one took Nivek's temeparature.
- Although Nivek's parents reported that Nivek had fed during the night no member of the medical staff observed this and no one checked that he had been feeding properly.

As a result none of the medical staff noticed or responded to Nivek's deteriorating condition.

One of staff, a young and inexperienced auxiliary nurse who had very little medical training did see Nivek at about 7am on 12th March 2011when she paid a visit after her shift as a friend of the family. She thought he was fine.

At about 8.30am Nivek's father noticed that his son was not breathing and asked for help. Nurses and then doctors attended and began to try to resuscitate Nivek. A blood sugar test carried out during resuscitation showed a reading of 1.1. Despite trying for about an hour the medical staff were unable to save Nivek and life was pronounced extinct at 9.29am.

- The absence of any clear protocols,
- the absence of a written clear care plan,
- the absence of clear monitoring parameters,
- the absence of clear instructions at handovers,
- the absence of night staff trained in caring for premature babies, and
- the absence of any medical monitoring, examination or testing of Nivek during the night for a period of approximately 8 hours

may have contributed either individually or cumulatively to Nivek's Death.

However there was insufficient evidence of a causal link between these matters and Nivek's death as the nature of the infection was such that, given the lack of specialist neonatal intensive care facilities available, even if it had been diagnosed earlier, his condition was probably not survivable in any event.

4.Conclusion of Coroner as to the death
Natural causes

5.Particulars required by the Registration Ordinance to be registered concerning the death

Name of deceased: Nivek Anthony Roderick McLaren Male

Date of birth & age: 11th March 2011 1 day

Occupation: Infant

Usual address: Parents address (Flat 3D Jersey Road, Stanley, Falkland Islands)

Date & place of death: 9.29am on 12th March 2011 at King Edward Memorial Hospital, Stanley, Falkland Islands

Signature of Coroner

Carl Gumsley