

'Doctor didn't write baby test results on her chart'

A NURSE has said a doctor facing poor professional performance claims over his treatment of a baby with chicken pox told her he had seen blood test results but didn't write them on a medical chart.

Baby Mia Carlin was admitted to Letterkenny University Hospital on June 24, 2013, with chicken pox but went on to develop sepsis.

A Medical Council inquiry was told blood tests were ordered the day before the 16-month-old was transferred to Our Lady's Children's Hospital in Crumlin, Dublin, but there was a delay in taking the sample.

At a resumed hearing into her treatment by Dr Matthew Tho-

By Louise Roseingrave

mas, of Oak Grove, Woodlands, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, a nurse said she asked Dr Thomas about the test results between 5pm and 6pm on June 26, 2013.

She told the inquiry: 'The doctor said he had seen the results. He'd seen the results but had not written that on the chart.' Simon Mills, barrister for Dr Thomas, previously told the inquiry the doctor ordered the sample that morning but it was not done until the afternoon.

Mr Mills said a print-out showing abnormally raised C-reactive protein levels (inflammation) was available at 4.29pm but was not brought to the

team at 5pm. He added that the results were not available to Dr Thomas when he asked for them around 6.30pm to 7pm.

The nurse told the hearing baby Mia was treated with an anti-itch cream and started on IV fluids shortly after 5pm.

She said there was 'no new intervention' for the child after Dr Thomas's review at 6pm.

Mr Mills said Dr Thomas did not recall talking to the nurse and first became aware of the elevated C-reactive protein in a phone call that evening. Registrar Dr Quram Ali saw the child at 7pm and described her as 'clinically stable'. The medical team got the test results at 7.40pm. The inquiry continues.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Don't jog away from the joy... January can be lit up easily

CHRISTMAS has been recycled and our hibernation is over. Here and there, you notice the odd reminder of Yuletide merriment: a listless tree lying on a lawn, a dilapidated wreath slowly dying on a door, seasonal rubbish that never made it to a bin. But now it is January – a guilt-filled month of mourning for bright lights and festive fun.

I have heard it said many times already: 'This is such a depressing month.' I have seen it in their grim faces as they seek to jog away the pounds. Some call it 'dry January' – as if cold turkey will somehow restore balance.

Why do we do it to ourselves? Why do we feel we must repent for Christmas? Why do we feel we must earn absolution on the treadmill?

Mortify the flesh and the sins of seasonal indulgence will be washed away. With such an attitude, is it any wonder that people dread January? Is it any wonder that children suffer when returning to school?

The lights that have been blazing since October are no more. The high-octane joy has given way to a sombre sadness. We are in a very dark place without so much as a lamp.

Yes, look closely and you will notice a slight stretch in the evenings. You will see the afternoon light has changed as the sun hangs a little higher in the sky. Things are turning, but not that fast.

We are still in the depths of winter – a time beyond growth and gladness. So why, then, do we extinguish the light, put on cold faces and punish ourselves for small joys? There is a reason the Church postpones Lent until the first shoots of spring.

The Dooleys have a way of surviving the post-Christmas slump. Down comes the tree and all the decorations, but we don't remove all the lights. We also light more candles at both ends of the day.

Somehow, it seems less stark, less shocking to the senses. It reminds us that, however dark the hour, we can look forward to new light. And then, as January fades away, our lights give way to the fresh glow of a new spring.

Slowly, gently, we say 'goodbye' to Christmas. We let it go, not brutally, but incrementally. Then, by the time Lent comes around, we have become well adjusted to the new year.

It all goes back to finding balance in everything. Our ancestors knew that the secret to happiness was moderation. We, on the other hand, opt for excess and become slaves to stress.

December: light, levity and joy. January: darkness, pain and gloom. Far better to find a middle way.

Whatever about adults, children do not easily adapt after Christmas. It takes time for our boys to re-adjust to so-called 'normality'. Only two weeks since Santa and now they are back in school.

They need to be reminded – we all need to be reminded – of what I call the 'January yellows'. The new sun is still young but soon it will expand to fill the sky. The buds are holding back but soon they, too, shall break free.

We have so much to look forward to, which is why we should cast away the blues. We should anticipate the yellows with hope and joy. Still, we need light to guide our way, we need to illumine those gentle flames at the dawning of the day.

JANUARY will only be depressing if we make it so. If we insist on punishing ourselves for savouring hearth and home, we shall see this month as an endurance. If, however, we see it as a bridge between past and future, it will become for us a walkway into a world of possibility.

That world will be one where the sun never ceases to shine, where the trees and shrubs pour forth their blessed abundance, and where the sweet scent of spring and summer linger in the air. It is a world so far removed from that presently outside your window. And yet, if we look hard enough, we can see glimpses of yellow beneath the winter blues.

January is what you make it. Opt for punishment and pain and you will endure every second of the darkness. You will find yourself wishing away the gift of life that is granted with each new day.

That is what it means to jog away from the joy. But there is another way, one which requires nothing more than a candle and a smile.

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