

Doctor's orders not carried out, inquest told

Records of girl's care incomplete, MD says

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Lisa Shore died in a hospital bed next to a morphine pump, an intravenous line and her mother.

The Toronto girl was admitted to the Hospital for Sick Children with a severe pain in her leg on the evening of Oct. 21, 1998. In the emergency room, she was given morphine by injection and later, through an intravenous line she controlled from her bed on floor 5A — her mother at her side.

By 8 o'clock the following morning, 10-year-old Lisa was dead.

A coroner's inquest that opened yesterday is trying to find out what happened and who is responsible.

"I want the truth and I want the hospital to acknowledge and accept responsibility for her death," said Lisa's mother, Sharon Shore. "Until they do that, I have no assurances that it is a safe place."

The packed courtroom heard that had the night doctor's orders been properly carried out by nurses, Lisa would be alive today.

Dr. Markus Schily, Lisa's doctor that night, testified he left the hospital close to midnight when Lisa's vital signs were normal. Because she suffered from reflex sympathetic dystrophy — a rare, non-fatal condition that often begins with a minor injury and leads to chronic pain — Dr. Schily wanted his patient monitored regularly. Because of her condition, Lisa was on a medication known to heighten the sedative effects of morphine.

Dr. Schily said a nurse from floor 5A called him at home about 4 a.m. and reported that Lisa's vital signs were fine.

"I asked 'Do you want me to come back in,' and she said, 'No there is no need,'" recalled Dr. Schily, who was not named in the civil suit the parents filed against the hospital. That suit was settled out of court last month.

At the request of Frank Gomberg, counsel for Lisa's parents, Dr. Schily compared a printout of his medical instructions with the nurses' handwritten account of the care Lisa received that night.

Asked whether he was shocked by the incomplete nurses' record, he nodded.

Mr. Gomberg pointed out to the court numerous instructions that



Sharon Shore, with her husband, Bill, outside the coroner's inquest that opened yesterday into the death of her daughter, Lisa. The 10-year-old died in hospital in 1998.

JOHN MORSTAD/The Globe and Mail

were not carried out, including:

- ◆ Lisa went without blood pressure and temperature tests for almost six hours, contrary to the doctor's orders.
- ◆ If her respiratory rate dropped below 11 breaths per minute, an anesthesiologist was to be contacted, but none was.
- ◆ When Lisa's respiratory rate fell to eight breaths per minute, a level of concern, no pulse was taken, contrary to protocol and doctor's orders.
- ◆ Dr. Schily's instruction to check Lisa's heart rate every hour was not followed, according to records from that night.

The court also heard that Lisa may not have been attached to the machine necessary to monitor her respiration. The machine is used to alarm nurses if breathing levels decrease to a dangerous level. Dr. Schily said one of the doctors, a member of the CPR team brought in to try to revive Lisa, told him no monitor was attached to Lisa's



Lisa Shore

body.

That point was emphasized by Crown counsel Margaret Browne during the doctor's testimony. "The question whether any monitors were attached is going to be the biggest issue of this inquest," she told the court.

The ordeal began after Lisa, described by family as a spirited, active girl, broke her leg in February of 1998. For the next few months the student at the Associated Hebrew School was in severe pain. But Toronto doctors couldn't say why. The family went to Children's Hospital in Boston, where Lisa was diagnosed with the rare condition.

After taking part in a long-distance walking event at her school in October, 1998, Lisa's leg started to hurt and she went with her mother to the Hospital for Sick Children.

"The phone rang at 7 a.m. and my daughter says 'Mum, come quick, something terrible is happening,'" Barbara Grief, Lisa's grandmother, recalled in an interview yesterday.

Mrs. Grief said her husband, Philip, died of a heart attack one month after Lisa. "He died from a broken heart," she said.

The inquest is continuing.