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INQUEST INTO DEATH OF THORNHILL GIRL AT SICK CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL BEGINS

## Nurses missed MD's orders

BY RICK VANDERLINDE  
Staff Writer

A 10-year-old Thornhill girl died in Sick Children's Hospital last year after nurses failed to check a doctor's orders detailing how she should be monitored, a coroner's inquest heard yesterday.

Dr. Markus Shily, an anesthetist, testified he was "shocked" to learn a number of his "safety measures"

were never followed on Oct. 22, 1998, the day Lisa Shore died in the pediatric hospital.

Lisa's parents rushed her to the Toronto hospital, hoping to control acute chronic pain that had plagued her since she broke her leg eight months earlier.

Shily, the on-call pain management doctor, placed Lisa on morphine, giving nurses detailed orders

through an in-house computer system to monitor her closely.

"It was very important for her to be monitored," Shily told a coroner's jury.

But Shily said he later learned nurses never checked the computer-based orders, causing them to miss vital precautions meant to detect potentially fatal side effects.

Waking a patient from time to

time was one of the basic safety measures that was never done with Lisa.

"The importance of this is so high," Shily testified. "I prefer to have a child awaken at different times of the night, rather than having a disaster."

When Lisa entered the hospital's emergency ward, she already had

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# Coroner's jury tries to find why Thornhill girl died

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two drugs in her system to help her battle reflex sympathetic dystrophy — an unusual syndrome marked by unexplained burning pain.

Monitoring Lisa's blood pressure and respiratory rate was even more important because of the other drugs in her system, Shily testified.

The cause of Lisa's death remains a mystery, but her parents believe she had an adverse reaction to the morphine, created by the other medications already in her system.

"We think she had a reaction to the morphine — a known reaction," Lisa's mother, Sharon Shore, told reporters. "And the people who were taking care of her did not do the things that they should have done to prevent her death."

The inquest heard that a nurse paged Shily at home about five hours after Lisa was admitted, telling him the little girl's breathing rate had dropped.

Shily said he wasn't concerned at the time because the nurse said all of Lisa's vital signs were "OK".

"The nurse said the patient was 'arousable' and that's very important," he said. "Her vitals were all right and she is arousable, so I concluded there was no reason to go to the hospital."

Nurses' charts show Lisa's pulse rate wasn't checked, even though her respiratory rate had dropped.

And the oxygen level in Lisa's blood was never monitored with a machine Shily ordered the nurses to use.

Another one of Shily's orders — to check Lisa's blood pressure every hour — also went unnoticed.

Shily, who now practices medicine in Israel, said if he had known the nurses never saw his detailed orders, he would have rushed to the hospital to check on Lisa. He didn't find out the nurses were working "blind" until the coroner's office released hospital records months later.

The Shore's lawyer, Frank Gomberg, asked Shily what his reaction was when he learned of the communication breakdown.

"It was of critical importance that

your information got to the (nurses') floor? Shocking may be understatement is that right?" Gomberg asked.

"Oh yes," Shily replied.

Computer technicians who administer Kid-Corn, a computer system at Sick Children's Hospital, are expected to tell the inquest the doctor's orders were

never accessed.

Lisa's parents pushed for the coroner's inquest after they obtained their daughter's hospital records.

With the help of friends in the medical community, the Shores learned something had gone terribly wrong the night their daughter died.

"They have to be made accountable so the people can know a hospital like this is a safe place to go," Sharon Shore said. "The loss of a child is not the sort of thing you would wish on anyone. We lost our daughter, our daughter should be with us."

The inquest continues.