

MD cross-examined on 6 cases involving former patients

Dr. Jack Ford was cross-examined on six cases in his final day of testimony before the Ontario Hospital Appeals Board Jan. 11.

Hospital lawyer Joshua Liswood suggested evidence may be given that a patient denies having a conversation about a procedure which Dr. Ford testified took place.

The case involved stillborn twins in 1980. The woman had three previous pregnancies, including a normal birth, a therapeutic abortion and a third pregnancy ended in "spontaneous" abortion early in 1979.

She had a history of a condition called an incompetent cervix. In such a condition, the cervix is unable to hold the fetus to term (38 to 40 weeks).

Dr. Ford planned to implant a Shirodkar Sitch in the fourth pregnancy to help the cervix but he testified earlier that after a discussion of the possible dangers, including induced labor, with the woman, the two decided in favor of "conservative" management of the twins.

"A reasonably prudent physician would have put the sitch in," said Mr. Liswood.

"If we, together, come up with a better way, then we do it together," said Dr. Ford of the decision not to use the sitch.

He said he had no notes to prove he had the discussion with the woman.

"If I were to put it to you that (the woman) denies ever refusing to have such a suture put in place would you disagree with her," asked Mr. Liswood.

The woman never refused it, the decision was made together, replied Dr. Ford.

In another case involving

premature ruptured membranes in 1987 a baby was born with a case of Erbs Palsy, said Mr. Liswood. Erbs Palsy involves nerve damage from the neck down the arm. Mr. Liswood said after the hearing.

The baby healed "spontaneously" shortly after birth, said Dr. Ford.

The case occurred three years after hospital guidelines were introduced giving specific instruction on how to deal with premature ruptured membranes, said Mr. Liswood.

The 19-year-old woman came to the hospital and was diagnosed with ruptured membranes early in the morning, said Dr. Ford.

She was suffering from a lack of fluid and back pain. Lack of amniotic fluid can lead to infection and trauma, said Mr. Liswood.

Dr. Ford's handwritten notes suspected the wetness was due to sweating, said Mr. Liswood.

Dr. Ford also admitted recording a fetal heartbeat of 80 on one occasion - far below the expected 120 beats.

Dr. Ford discharged the woman at 6:30 p.m. - a move which disregards hospital guidelines, said Mr. Liswood.

Dr. Ford said the woman had a "social situation" which required she return home. He said she lived about ten minutes from the hospital and she was prepared to sign herself out.

The woman had stopped leaking at 2:30 p.m., said Dr. Ford.

The woman returned to the hospital shortly before midnight in labor. She delivered the baby at 2:09 a.m., said Mr. Liswood.

Dr. Ford said he used a mid-forceps delivery to speed up the delivery because the fetal heart rate

was dropping.

The baby was also very big - six pounds - compared to the mother who was under five feet, said Dr. Ford.

Erbs Palsy occurs "not infrequently" in babies, said Dr. Ford. It is a result of improper position of the

shoulders compared to the head, he said.

In another case in 1986 involving a mid-forceps delivery a baby was born with facial paralysis and abrasions on its head, said Mr. Liswood.

Dr. Ford said the case involved a

"difficult pull" in the use of the forceps.

He said the baby was rotated to the occipital posterior position - a position which makes delivery more difficult than occipital anterior - because it was the shortest way to rotate the baby.

Asked why he hadn't tried to perform a Caesarian section, Dr. Ford said progress was being made.

Mr. Liswood suggested the baby was making progress on its own.

The abrasions healed and the facial paralysis responded quickly so there was "no subsequent deficit to the baby," said Dr. Ford.

Mr. Liswood also cross-examined Dr. Ford on a case in which he contended a baby suffered a crushed skull.

The baby suffered from a case of Spinabifida, a disease which causes spinal defects and fluid around the head as well as softening of the bones.

The baby died shortly after birth and the coroner's office looked into the case, said Mr. Liswood.

Dr. Ford said he had no knowledge of a coroner's inquest although he had been told by McMaster Medical Centre that the case would be referred to the coroner.

Dr. Ford used forceps in the delivery because the patient had "made no progress, he said.

"Was there no evidence of forceps causing a crushed skull?" asked Mr. Liswood.

"There was no evidence that I could see that there was any crushed skull air," said Dr. Ford.

In another case involving damage to a baby's skull in 1981 Dr. Ford used the mid-forceps procedure to deliver the baby.

He said the delivery involved a difficult pull and the baby was born with a hematoma (a serious bruise) on the right forehead.

"Occasionally sutures are hard to locate and the blades (of the forceps) can't be placed where should be," said Dr. Ford. He said the family took care of the baby after it was born and he never saw it again.

Mr. Liswood said the baby was transferred to the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

"Are you aware of any problems with mid-forceps (in the case)?" asked Mr. Liswood.

"No," replied Dr. Ford.

"That ends that," said Mr. Liswood.

After further cross-examination the hospital began introducing its evidence with former Medical Advisory Committee Chief of Staff Boyd Hoddinot taking the stand.

Dr. Hoddinot's testimony Monday concentrated mainly on the incidents leading up to the MAC's examination of Dr. Ford's practice late in 1985.

He was expected to continue his testimony for most of the day Tuesday.

Ford lawyer counters with stats of his own

Dr. Jack Ford wrapped up his testimony before the Ontario Hospital Appeals Board by introducing statistics on his practice Jan. 11.

Between January, 1979 and July 1982 an OHIP investigation of Dr. Ford's practice found that in 152 of 304 cases, there was no substantiating diagnosis to prove that a Dilatage and Curettage (D and C) operation was required, said Dr. Ford.

OHIP demanded remuneration of payments amounting to 70 per cent of the 152 cases or about 105 cases, said Dr. Ford.

Dr. Ford said it is common practice to conduct a D and C operation with certain types of sterilization procedures and he was taught to do the operation.

The report found it to be common practice also, said Dr. Ford.

Dr. Ford also quoted some statistics from the Georgetown hospital's delivery room records.

Between January, 1979 and April, 1987 Dr. Ford had delivered 1,438 babies. The total for the hospital in that period was 2,854.

In total, 149 mid-forceps deliveries were made at the hospital and Dr. Ford said he made 99 of those deliveries.

Some 547 Caesarian sections were conducted at Georgetown hospital in the same time period, 399 of which were performed by Dr. Ford.

Dr. Ford appeal

Continued from page A1

Another physician then told her she had no congenital problems so Mrs. Leuenberger consulted a lawyer.

Under cross-examination by Mr. MacKenzie, Mrs. Leuenberger said there was no indication Dr. Ford was suspicious of the dates.

Mrs. Leuenberger also told Mr. MacKenzie she was never told Dr. Kumar was on call that weekend.

Mr. MacKenzie told the Board that the second dose of sedative was ordered after Dr. Ford contacted the hospital at 2:45 p.m., not after a phone call from the nurses at 2 p.m.

Mrs. Leuenberger said the nurse claimed to have contacted Dr. Ford.

But Monday was not without supportive evidence for Dr. Ford. Margaret Bulgarelli said when Dr. Ford delivered her baby in July, 1986, "It was probably the happiest day of my life."

Mrs. Bulgarelli is now 22 weeks pregnant and she said she intends to ask Dr. Ford to deliver her second baby wherever he can.

"He spent lots and lots of time with me," during monthly visits in the time leading up to the birth, said Mrs. Bulgarelli.

She was 13 weeks pregnant when she visited Dr. Ford seeking a natural child birth.

Dr. Ford discussed all the possibilities, including the possible need for forceps, before the birth of the child, said Mrs. Bulgarelli.

Mrs. Bulgarelli said she wanted to avoid all freezing if possible during the delivery. However Dr. Ford told her the baby was large so he had to freeze her for an episiotomy (an operation in which the vagina is surgically cut to allow for delivery).

"I said I wanted to go as far as I could... and that's what I got," said Mrs. Bulgarelli.

Dr. Ford administered gas at one point during the delivery because that's what she had requested, said Mrs. Bulgarelli.

She testified that the baby was delivered at 5:05 p.m. but at 3:30 p.m. she was told to lie on her side because there was a possibility that

the baby may suffer from a lack of oxygen.

Mrs. Bulgarelli was told under cross-examination by hospital lawyer Joshua Liswood that Dr. Ford applied forceps to the baby only 20 minutes into the second stage of delivery. Dr. Ford had previously testified that an hour is a normal waiting time for the second stage before applying forceps.

Neither the baby nor the mother showed any signs of distress, said Mr. Liswood. "Did he tell you why he used mid-forceps?" he asked.

To that Mrs. Bulgarelli replied the use of forceps was a "joint decision" because she had expressed concern about the amount of time her baby may have been suffering from a lack of oxygen.

She conceded the child was born with a bruise on its face but that cleared up the next day. Dr. Ford told Mrs. Bulgarelli the bruise was made by the forceps.

But Mrs. Bulgarelli emphasized her desire to return to Dr. Ford.

"Anytime I went to see Dr. Ford it didn't matter how busy he was - his waiting room could be wall to wall with people - he always took the time to spend as much time with me as I wanted," she said.

"I want him to deliver my baby. If I can't deliver in Georgetown I would like Dr. Ford to be present wherever," she said to an applause from the predominantly female audience.

Upon rising to begin cross-examination Mr. Liswood responded: "We'll have that referred to the Academy Awards."

Police beat

Impaired

A Georgetown man observed sitting in his car at 224 Maple Ave. in Georgetown with his engine running was found impaired when checked by police. The 33-year-old will appear in court Feb. 1 on impaired driving charges.

Window smashed

Someone smashed the passenger window of a 1981 Ford pick-up, opened the hood and stole a battery valued at \$40, sometime between 6:30 p.m. Jan. 9 and 8 a.m. Jan. 6. The vehicle, parked at 315 Armstrong Avenue in Georgetown, received \$100 damage to the window.

Shoplifter

A 48-year-old Georgetown woman will appear in court Jan. 25 after being caught shoplifting Jan. 6 at 7:30 p.m. Approximately \$20 worth of groceries were taken from Loblaw's at 250 Guelph St. in Georgetown.

Drug charge

A 25-year-old Norval man was charged with possession of narcotics Jan. 8 at 4:25 a.m. at Steeles Avenue on the 10th Line. The man, who was found with marijuana, will appear in court Feb. 8.

Car ransacked

A white sweat shirt, pair of jeans, 400 cassette tapes and case valued at \$500, were taken from an unlocked vehicle parked at 1 Elmore Dr. in Acton between 1 a.m. and 8 a.m. Jan. 7.

Impaired driver

A 24-year-old Orton man will appear in court Feb. 1 on a charge of impaired driving. The man was observed driving erratically on Trafalgar Road and Stewarttown Road Jan. 8 at 3:02 a.m.

Robbery, assault

A 17-year-old Acton youth was charged with two counts of robbery and one count of assault following a Dec. 31 incident. Two children were accosted on Main Street in Acton New Year's Eve and relieved of a small amount of money. The young offender will appear in court Jan. 23.

Door kicked

Someone kicked a large hole in the glass door of a Becker's store located at 352 Queen St. in Acton sometime between 12:10 a.m. and 3:30 a.m. Jan. 4. Damage to the door was \$200.

VCR unclaimed

Police found a video disc player, believed to have been stolen last August at 51 Main St. in Georgetown. The disc player is at the Georgetown police station.

Sewing plus chilly outing

Starting in February, the Ballinacraigh 4-H Club will make available to young people between the ages of 12 and 21, two new projects of their choice.

Sewing Plus is a second-level project aimed at members who have already learned to sew, have made at least one garment and know how to operate a sewing machine. Members will learn to sew a shirt with interfacing and a collar.

Encounter the outdoors and learn to select a camp site, then equip it and set it up. Fires are for warmth, cooking and signalling, so you will be able to build and maintain a fire safely and efficiently. The project will be topped off with an outing that will represent a challenge and fun. Interested in participating? Phone Lynn Silclair at 877-3838 or Helga Schwarz at 877-7000.

Unsafe passing

Severe damage resulted from an accident Jan. 6 at 6:30 p.m. on 32 Sideroad and Highway 25. A 1984 green Mercury, driven by a 20-year-old Orangeville man, was travelling eastbound on the 32 Sideroad. As the vehicle approached a crest in a hill it crossed the centre line striking a 1981 green Oldsmobile Cutlass, driven by a Rockwood man. A charge of passing vehicles and meeting others was laid.

Follows too close

A charge of following too close was laid following a 3:30 p.m. Jan. 5 accident on River Drive at Mountainview Road North. A 1984 grey Chevrolet, driven by a 66-year-old Powassan man, was west on River Drive pulling into the intersection. A white 1984 GMC, driven by a 20-year-old Georgetown man, was also west on River Drive and collided with the rear of the Chevrolet. The GMC received light damage while the Chevrolet received moderate damage.

Fails to yield

A 1978 silver Toyota Celica struck a 30-year-old woman while she was walking along Main Street South Jan. 3 at 1:30 p.m. Lucy Cronin of Georgetown was treated and released from the Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital. The Celica was turning left from Mill Street to Main Street South. Before completing the turn it hit a pedestrian walking with the walk signal. A charge of failing to yield the right of way was laid.

Cars collide

Severe damage to a 1980 blue Dodge and light damage to a grey 1988 Pontiac resulted in a 3:40 p.m. accident Jan. 5 at Mountainview Road North and King Street. The Pontiac, driven by a 32-year-old Guelph man, was southbound on Mountainview. The Dodge, driven by a 73-year-old Georgetown man, left the stop sign on King Street, colliding with the Pontiac. A charge of failing to yield the right-of-way was laid.

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