

Not Relevant

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Witness Name: Mary Tonner

Statement No.: WITN2277001

Exhibits: **None**

Dated: 8th February, 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARY TONNER

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5 November 2018.

I, Mary Tonner, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Mary Tonner. My date of birth is **GRO-C** 1937. My address is known to the enquiry. I intend to speak about my brother Jim Ure and his illness. In particular, the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment received and the impact it had on him and our lives together.
2. I can confirm that I have appointed Thompsons Solicitors to be my legal representative. I confirm that the enquiry should send all correspondence regarding me to Thompsons.

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Section 2. How Affected

3. Jim Ure was my older brother. My father died when I was 14. Jim and I were very close, he was 15 years older than me, and was like a father figure to me.
4. In 1972 Jim had a prostate operation at Falkirk Royal infirmary. I remember that he needed a blood transfusion. I don't know why he needed a blood transfusion. I assume that he lost a lot of blood during the operation.
5. I do not know if Jim was provided with any information or advice before the transfusion about the risk of being exposed to infection.
6. My brother was infected with hepatitis C.
7. Sometime in the 1980s Jim developed a bad back. I know he went to his doctors regarding this. He was prescribed painkillers and the Dr took his blood. This doctor was Dr Ogilvie, Meadowbank Surgery, Falkirk.
8. A few weeks later Jim went back to the doctors' surgery for his blood results. I remember clearly Jim telling me that the doctor had told him that he had hepatitis C. Jim said he was really embarrassed because the doctor had said to him, "I have to ask you something personal, are you a homosexual?". Jim was mortified at this. The doctor told him it was a bad blood infection.
9. I do not know what information was provided to Jim about the infection. Jim did say to me that the doctor had said that I wouldn't be able to drink out of the same cup as him.

10. I do not know if adequate information was given to Jim to enable him to manage and understand the infection. I doubt it was because if the doctor told him I could catch hepatitis C from drinking out of Jim's cup then he probably didn't know much about the infection.
11. I think Jim found out that he had hepatitis C as soon as it was discovered following his blood test.
12. Jim only told me that I could catch the infection if I drank out of the same cup as him. Nothing else was said to me about how Jim could pass the infection on to others.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. Jim did not receive any other infection or infections other than hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood products.

Section 4. Consent

14. I do not know if Jim was treated or tested without his knowledge, consent or without being given adequate or full information
15. I do not know if Jim's blood was used for the purpose of research.

Section 5. Impact

16. Jim was a very active man but over time he complained of lower back pain and he was unable to walk. Jim loved to walk and not being able to get out made him quite depressed.
17. I don't think Jim developed any further medical complications or conditions as a result of the infection except cancer.
18. Jim complained of back pain and was back and forward to the doctor's. He was constantly dismissed, he told me that the doctors just thought it was wear and tear. I could tell however, that he was in a lot of pain.
19. I remember in 2003 I went with Jim to Edinburgh Royal infirmary. Jim saw a male Doctor, I do not know the doctor's name. I remember Jim saw the doctor. The doctor said Jim's condition was fatal. He said that because Jim was a healthy eater and had had an active lifestyle that it is what had kept him alive. I remember the doctor shook his hand and said that he was a miracle, his life style had prolonged his life.
20. Over the next few months Jim's condition deteriorated. He was in constant pain in his back. I remember a time when he was in hospital and one of the nurses said "he can fairly put it on can't he". They thought there was nothing wrong with him. He was discharged. Jim went home but he was in a lot of pain. He was not home very long because he was in so much pain he had to go back into hospital where he died in 2004.
21. I do not think Jim was offered any treatment. As far as I am aware he was only ever on painkillers.
22. I do not think Jim's infected status impacted upon his treatment or dental care for any other conditions.

23. The impact for Jim being infected with hepatitis C ultimately cost him his life. He had been a very fit and active man. He walked for two hours every morning. He also walked with his friend most evenings. I would say he would walk at least 100 miles a week. Towards the end of his life he could not get out to walk because of the pain. You knew if Jim didn't go out for a walk he was very ill.
24. Jim was a sociable man, he knew everyone and everyone knew him. He became very withdrawn after he was told about his infected status. He enjoyed casual work on farms, in particular Woodside Farm, Bo'ness. He would enjoy this type of work and was devastated when in the late 80s he could no longer physically do it anymore. He loved reading books but he lost the ability to concentrate. He was very frustrated.
25. Jim had never married and lived on his own. I became his full-time carer towards the end of his life. I love my brother and would have done anything for him but it was exhausting running two households.
26. I became very stressed and worried that I was also infected. I had had a miscarriage a year or so after Jim had received his prostate operation. I also had to have a blood transfusion at Falkirk hospital. I went to see my own GP Dr Thompson, Avonbridge Surgery and asked to have my blood tested. He did take my blood but he was very dismissive, he said "are you jumping on the bandwagon?". They assumed I wanted money. I was very upset because I wanted to know if I had contracted hepatitis C because I had grandchildren and I wanted to make sure I didn't infect them. I did not ever get the results of those blood tests. Not long after, there was some publicity about people being infected with contaminated blood and contracting AIDS and hepatitis C. I remember Dr Thompson phoned me up and asked me to go into the surgery so I could get tested. I can only assume he

didn't send my first bloods off for testing. Fortunately my test results were negative but it was a very worrying time.

27. Jim was aware of the stigma surrounding hepatitis C. It was associated with AIDS and homosexuality. Jim was very much a heterosexual and hated the thought that anyone thought he may be a homosexual. He didn't tell anyone and kept his infected status to himself. I know he was embarrassed when his doctor had asked him if he was a homosexual when he told Jim he had hepatitis C. I also remember Jim telling me that he had been approached by a friend of his who said, "I didn't know you were on the other side ". He was referring to him being a homosexual. Jim was very embarrassed.
28. Jim had no wife or children but he was a very much loved brother, and uncle. We were all devastated to watch his health deteriorate and heartbroken when he died.
29. Jim had been a miner but he lost his job when the pit closed. He loved to work on farms and casual work, particularly at harvest time or lambing season. Due to his illness it was hard for him to work in this physical environment. He was upset we could no longer continue with his position.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

30. As far as I am aware Jim was never offered any counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

31. Jim did not receive any financial assistance from any trust or funds setup to distribute payments.

32. I found out that financial assistance was available for people that had been infected with contaminated blood by a receptionist at Dr Thompson's surgery. She gave me a telephone number for the Skipton fund. I was sent out a form, I filled it in and sent it back.
33. Not long after I received a lump sum of £20,000 from the Skipton fund.
34. I had to get Jim's medical records in relation to his blood transfusion I was told by the Skipton fund. I went to Falkirk hospital for Jim's records but I was told they had been lost.
35. I don't believe there were any preconditions imposed on the making of an application.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. I do not want to remain anonymous in this enquiry. I am 81 years old, however, and not in good health so I would like my daughter Linda to be my representative.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

GRO-C

Dated 12 " 3 " 2019