

Witness Name: Avril Joan Davies
Statement No: WITN3723001
Exhibits: **WITN3723002-**
WITN3723005
Dated: 10th September 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF AVRIL JOAN DAVIES

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 17th September 2019. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, Avril Joan Davies, will say as follows:-

1. Introduction

1. My name is Avril Joan Davies. My date of birth is GRO-C 1962 and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. My statement will talk about how my mum, Eiry Janetta Jenkins, contracted hepatitis C following a blood transfusion in August 1991. My mum sadly

passed away on 10th January 1998 due to receiving contaminated blood products.

2.How Infected

1. Mum received a blood transfusion in August 1991 either during or after a hernia operation at West Wales General Hospital in Carmarthen. Mum was in intensive care following the surgery so, as a family, we aren't sure if she received the transfusion during or after the surgery. We managed to obtain a few of Mum's hospital notes but there are no notes relating to the surgery and we have been told that these would have been destroyed in line with the NHS's records destruction policy.
2. From the few medical records that were available to us there is a letter from Dr Ch'ng at Carmarthen and District NHS Trust to Dr Salam at West Wales General Hospital, which states that Mum had an "episode of hepatitis" in 1991 following the hernia operation. Exhibited before me at WITN3723002 is the letter between Dr Ch'ng and Dr Salam dated 20th June 1995. We are as sure as we can be that Mum had no idea that she had what the doctor describes as an episode of hepatitis after her operation as she would have said something to one of her daughters or close family members. She was particularly close to my dad's sister so I am sure she would have discussed this with her if she had have known.
3. Mum's medical records suggest that the doctors knew of Mum's hepatitis C infection in 1993. Exhibited before me at WITN3723003 is a page from Mum's records from what appears to be January 1995 saying that the

hepatitis C infection had been "known since 2 years". Even if this isn't the case the records do show that the hospital definitely knew she had hepatitis C in 1995 but Mum wasn't told until May 1996. Again I am as sure as I can be that Mum wasn't aware that she had hepatitis C in 1995. What would have happened if she had infected any of the family and those closest to her just because the medical professionals chose not to tell her that she had hepatitis C?

4. It wasn't until 16th May 1996 that Mum was told that she had hepatitis C. Dr David Hutton from the National Blood Transfusion Service (Wales) visited Mum at home to advise her that she had contracted hepatitis C and that it was likely that this was from the blood transfusion in August 1991. However, Dr Hutton made contact with Dr Salam at West Wales General Hospital via letter on 19th February 1996 to advise that Mum was hepatitis C positive. It then took a further three months for Dr Hutton to tell Mum in person. I'm sure that during this time Mum would have visited the hospital for liver treatment so surely she should have been told earlier especially with this letter being within her notes which any of the Consultants she saw would have had access to. Exhibited before me at WITN3723004 is the letter from Dr Hutton to Dr Salam advising that the hepatitis C lookback exercise confirmed Mum was positive for hepatitis C.
5. I remember being at the house when Mum was told that she had hepatitis C but I don't really remember much of the conversation. As far as I remember Mum wasn't told about any risks of infection to us as her family. The only part

I really remember today is that she was told not to share towels and to be careful if she cut herself but it wasn't in the context of any risk to us.

6. Mum also had cirrhosis of the liver and the hepatitis C is likely to have caused this. In the letter between Dr Ch'ng and Dr Salam already exhibited at WITN3723002 Dr Ch'ng says that since her hernia operation "her LFT's have been following a yo-yo fashion compatible with hepatitis C"

3.Other infections

1. As far as we as a family are aware Mum did not receive any other infections other than hepatitis C. However, the hepatitis C did lead to cirrhosis of her liver.

4.Consent

1. In regards to the issue of consent we don't know what Mum consented to prior to the hernia operation but do understand, if she was in an emergency situation during or after the surgery, that she may have required a blood transfusion regardless of consent.
2. Mum regularly had blood tests so it is definitely a possibility that she was being tested without her knowledge or without knowing the full range of tests that were being carried out on her blood. Her records certainly show that the doctors knew sometime before Mum that she had hepatitis C so surely her blood was being tested without Mum's full knowledge of the types of tests being carried out.

5.Impact

1. The hepatitis C did have a negative impact on Mum and her life and had both mental and physical effects. Physically I just remember how tired and lethargic she was. She didn't want to do the things that she had done previously because of the fatigue she felt. She developed a rash over large parts of her body which was itchy and painful for her. Mentally she did get depressed and down due to her symptoms. Mum and Dad retired not long after the operation but with Mum's ill health caused by the hepatitis C they weren't able to enjoy their retirement how they had planned.
2. Mum's attitude to doctors was that they were not to be questioned and what the doctor told you was correct. She wouldn't even have thought to ask how long the medical professionals had known she had hepatitis C.
3. I wasn't living at home at the time of Mum's hernia operation and the blood transfusion. I got married in August 1991 and do remember that Mum wasn't able to help with any of the wedding preparations as she was too tired and just didn't have the ability to help as much as she wanted to. After my son was born in GRO-C 1992 Mum would come up and visit in the first few weeks but she never stayed overnight and these visits soon stopped as she was just too tired. I remember that once my son was a bit older I would drive down to Mum instead and this worked much better as she loved to see her grandchildren but was also happy that she could be in her chair and not exert herself. It is hard to think about the impact on me personally and the family as I try not to think about it too often. That's not to say there hasn't been an impact on me as there definitely has been. It is sad that Mum has missed out

on seeing new grandchildren being born and all of her grandchildren growing up.

4. Mum didn't really experience any stigma in relation to the hepatitis C but this may have been because people didn't understand what it was or how serious it was back then and just accepted it. Mum told family and close friends that she was infected but they all just accepted it and carried on as normal.

6.Treatment/Care Support

1. There was a delay in Mum's treatment as she wasn't told for five years that she had hepatitis C and a lot of the damage was done to her liver by the time she was told. Mum didn't have any Interferon treatment that we are aware of but there is a note in her records saying that "a suggestion that Alpha Interferon would be a possibility after a liver biopsy and a PCR test in October 1995". Exhibited before me at WITN3723005 is the page from Mum's notes that mentions the Alpha Interferon after the PCR and liver biopsy.
2. Of the notes we have been able to obtain there is no suggestion that Mum ever went on to Interferon and hearing, over the course of the Inquiry, the terrible side effects that people have experienced with Interferon, I don't think she ever started a course of the treatment.

7.Financial Assistance

1. In regards to financial assistance Mum didn't receive any assistance personally.

2. After Mum passed away we knew nothing about any funds or schemes that could offer assistance. In the early 2010's I heard on the radio of a scheme called the Skipton Fund who were offering assistance to those who had been infected or affected due to contaminated blood prior to September 1991.
3. The application itself was a long and drawn out process and initially in 2011 we were refused assistance as we could not produce the records that proved Mum had had a blood transfusion in August 1991. As this was 20 years after Mum had passed away they should have paid consideration to the NHS's records destruction policy. It was only by chance and with the help of our AM Angela Burns that the hospital were able to locate a small number of records that confirmed that Mum had received a blood transfusion in August 1991. In 2012 we received confirmation from the Skipton Fund that we had been deemed eligible for the £20,000 ex gratia payment.

8. Other Issues

1. We just want to know why this happened and for it never to happen again.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

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Dated.....10/9/19.....