

Witness Name: John Dickson

Statement No: WITN2119001

Exhibits: WITN2119002-003

Dated: 27th June 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JOHN DICKSON

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

I, John Dickson, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is John Cairns Dickson. My date of birth is GRO-C 1981. My address is known to the enquiry. I am a mathematics lecturer at Forth Valley College. I intend to speak about my contraction of hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me.

2. I can confirm that I have appointed Thompsons solicitors to be my legal representative. I confirm that the Inquiry should send all correspondence regarding me to Thompsons.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I was born with severe type A haemophilia. This was discovered when I was one year old. Up until I was two years of age if I had a bleed I would receive cryoprecipitate. After two years of age I would receive Factor VIII blood products.
4. I received Factor VIII blood products at Yorkhill Hospital, Glasgow. I was under the care of Doctor Gibson however the person I saw was normally Doctor Pettigrew.
5. I don't know the exact dates I received Factor VIII blood products. Between 1982 and 1987 I received a number of Factor VIII blood products at Yorkhill Hospital.
6. It is during this period that I received contaminated Factor VIII blood products and contracted hepatitis C.
7. My mother and I were not given any information or advice before I received Factor VIII blood products about the risk of being exposed to infection.
8. I contracted hepatitis C although at that time it was known as non-A and non-B hepatitis.
9. In 1990 when I was about 10 years old I went to Yorkhill hospital with my mother to see Doctor Gibson this is when I was told that I had contracted hepatitis C. I believe it was Dr Gibson that told my mother and I. My mother and I were told that although I had contracted hepatitis C my antibodies had cleared the infection up itself. There is

reference in my medical notes that I was positive for hepatitis C. I can produce this in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2119002**. There is also reference to me having a liver ultrasound because of my hepatitis status on the 23/12/1994. I produce this reference in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2119003**.

10. My mother and I were not given any information about the infection.
11. As my infection had cleared up and was non-detectable there was no information given to my mother regarding the infection.
12. I believe that I should have been informed about the infection as soon as it was detectable.
13. Prior to discovering I had been infected with hepatitis C, my mother whilst at the haemophilia unit, had asked about the risk of infection through contaminated blood products. She tells me that no one could provide conclusive information or reassurance that I would not be infected.
14. As my infection had cleared no information was given regarding the risks of others being infected as a result of the infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

15. I did not contract any other infection as a result of being given infected blood products.

Section 4. Consent

16. I discovered I had been infected whilst at the haemophilia centre at Yorkhill Hospital for Sick Children. By the time I attended at the Haemophilia Unit at Glasgow Royal infirmary it was known that I had been infected. I was under the care of Dr Tate but mainly saw Dr Alvi most of the time. I had my bloods taken every time I attended at the Haemophilia Unit.
17. I was not given adequate or full information about what my blood was being tested for it was very much routine.
18. I do not know if my blood was used for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

19. Around 1987 when I was six years of age I became very unwell. My mother called for the doctor who attended at our home address. The doctor who saw me was Doctor Styles from the Wallace Medical Centre, Falkirk. The doctor noticed that the whites of my eyes were yellow and he sent me to Yorkhill Hospital for Sick Children to be checked over. I cannot remember what happened at the hospital but I was not detained. I believe this was the only physical effect I have experienced by being infected with hepatitis C.
20. I did suffer mental effects of being infected with hepatitis C despite the fact it had cleared up. I became very introverted and even though the infection had cleared it was always on my mind that I may pass the infection on to others. As a teenager I was not as forward in forming relationships with the opposite sex for this reason.
21. There were no further medical complications or conditions that resulted from the infection.

22. My mother tells me that before being put on heat treated factor VIII if I had a bleed the doctors at Yorkhill Hospital were reluctant to give me Factor VIII blood products unless it was a serious bleed. My mother tells me that she was told that they would only give me Factor VIII blood products as a last resort. In hindsight, they must have known at the time that some blood products were contaminated otherwise I would have routinely received it. As a result of not receiving as much Factor VIII blood products as I should have I have been left with arthritis in my ankle.
23. I was told that I had contracted hepatitis C but that my own antibodies had killed it off therefore I was not offered or given any treatment.
24. As I was told I no longer had hepatitis C my infected status did not impact upon any medical treatment or dental care for any other conditions.
25. The impact of contracting hepatitis C has had minimal effects on my private, family and social life. It is something I do think about often. I find it horrendous to think that as a young child I was given contaminated blood products and contracted hepatitis C.
26. I am aware that there is a stigma that surrounds hepatitis C and haemophilia in general. When I was around 12 years of age there was a lot of publicity about haemophiliacs contracting hepatitis C and HIV through contaminated blood. The infections were also associated with homosexuality. I remember in my first year of secondary school a teacher approached me, he knew I was a haemophiliac and he said that I shouldn't be in school. The teachers were always having meetings at school regarding me being involved in physical education and my care. My mother tells me that the other children's parents at school were reluctant for me to play with their sons and daughters.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

27. About eight or 10 years ago I was offered genetic counselling at the Haemophilia Centre at Glasgow Royal infirmary. I have never been offered or given counselling for contracting hepatitis C.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

28. In 2004 I found out from Dr Tait and Dr Alvi at the Haemophilia Centre in Glasgow that I was entitled to financial assistance for contracting hepatitis C. In 2006 or 2007 I received a lump sum of £20,000 from the Skipton fund. In 2017 after the Penrose Inquiry I received £30,000 from the Skipton fund. In December 2018 I was awarded £1000 every year from the hepatitis C trust fund from the Scottish government.
29. I did not face any difficulties or obstacles in applying for or obtaining financial assistance.
30. I do not recall there being any preconditions imposed on the making of an application for financial assistance.
31. The process of applying for financial assistance was straightforward. I merely filled an application form in and sent it off to the Skipton fund.

Section 8. Other Issues

32. I do not want to remain anonymous in this Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

27/6/14