

Witness Name: Helen Drysdale

Statement No.: WITN2128001

Exhibits: None

20th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HELEN DRYSDALE

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

I, Helen Drysdale, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Helen Davis Dickson Drysdale. My date of birth is GRO-C 1930 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am an elderly lady, deaf and not in good health. 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 and my family.

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.

Section 2. How Infected

3. On 17 March 1985 I was rushed into hospital with a perforated ulcer. I had to have an operation and lost a lot of blood. I was given a blood transfusion at this time. The hospital I was taken to was the old Royal infirmary at Lauriston Place, Edinburgh. I do not know the names of the doctors whose care I was under at that time.
4. When I was taken into hospital I was rushed down for surgery and needed a blood transfusion during the operation. I was not given any information or advice beforehand about the risks of being exposed to infection.
5. As a result of having the blood transfusion I was given infected chronic viral hepatitis C.
6. Sometime between 1995 and 2002 I had of hip replacement at Princess Margaret Rose Hospital, Fairmilehead, Edinburgh. Whilst I was in hospital I was asked if I would be willing to allow the medical team to take some of my bone marrow as a donation. I agreed to this.
7. A few months later when I went back to the hospital for a check-up appointment I was told that they could not use the bone marrow I had donated as I had hepatitis C. I cannot remember who told me that I had hepatitis C.
8. There was no information given to me about the infection at that time. I did not know what hepatitis C was. There was no information given to me to understand and manage the infection

9. I think I was informed that I had the infection at the earliest opportunity.

10. I do remember I was told to be careful with hygiene and that the infection could be passed to others. I remember I was advised to tell my daughters of the infection in order for them to be tested also. I do remember there was talk of being able to catch the infection through using the same toothbrush.

Section 3. Other Infections

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

Section 4. Consent

12. I do not know if I was treated or tested without my knowledge or without my consent or without being given adequate or full information or for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

13. There were no mental effects of being infected with hepatitis C. There were no immediate physical effects of being infected with hepatitis C. However, prior to being given the transfusion I was a fit and healthy woman. After the transfusion my health began to deteriorate. I suffered with terrible pain in my hips, knees, my back and my legs. I also developed arthritis.

14. I was offered no treatment for hepatitis C.

15. I do not know if there was any treatment available for hepatitis C at that time.

16. There was no real impact of being infected with hepatitis C on my private, family and social life.

17. There was no real impact on my family as a result of me contracting hepatitis C. My health has meant that perhaps I couldn't enjoy family activities as much as I would have liked to.

18. There has been no impact on me or my family regarding the stigma associated with the diagnosis of hepatitis C

19. I did not suffer any educational effects or work-related effects as a result of being infected with hepatitis C.,

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

20. I did not receive counselling or psychological support. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21. I have received no financial assistance from any trust or funds as a result of me being infected with hepatitis C.

Section 8. Other Issues

22. I do not wish to remain anonymous in this enquiry. However, I am deaf, elderly and in poor health. I appoint my daughter Val to be my representative and act on my behalf.

23. During a home visit from a health visitor she left a copy of my medical notes. I have handed in a copy to Thompsons Solicitors. It clearly states 01/01/1985 Chronic viral hepatitis C from blood transfusion.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____ GRO-C

Dated 9/3/2019