

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN0130001

Exhibits: 0

Dated 28 March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B

GRO-B

2. I make this statement as the daughter of GRO-B: M GRO-B

GRO-B

and who was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood.

3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late mother's full medical records. I have been informed by the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) in Newcastle upon Tyne that her records have been destroyed.

4. My GRO-B has also provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry dated 28 March 2019 GRO-B

Section 2. How infected

5. My mother received contaminated blood through blood transfusions which she received between 1968 and 1973 at the RVI. She had the blood transfusions during operations; a caesarean, removal of ovaries and fallopian tubes, and for miscarriages. All the operations took place at the RVI. I was born by caesarean section in 1960 in Spain but I do not know if my mother received any blood transfusions during this operation..
6. In 2002, my mother woke up one morning and she could not move her hand as it had clawed. My sister and I took her to GRO-B our GP, and he did a blood test. When we saw him for the results he said 'Have you ever been bright yellow?' my mother was not sure and then he said 'you have Hepatitis C'. He went on to say my mother could have been infected through a blood transfusion.
7. I believe my mother was not informed beforehand about any risk of infection from a blood transfusion.
8. My mother was not given any information or advice to help her manage the infection or about the risks of others being infected
9. The information my mother, received was absolutely inadequate. My sister and I started looking into Hepatitis C ourselves to find out what it was. We did not receive any information from the medical professionals.
10. We should have been provided with adequate information as soon as possible. We are not medically trained so it was the doctor's duty to help us understand and manage the infection.
11. As a family we were in shock and very saddened when we found out my mother had been infected from a blood transfusion. It was especially upsetting

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for my mother. She did not fully understand and no body tried to provide her with any advice.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. As far as I am aware my mother did not have any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

13. I believe that my mother was tested without her knowledge, consent and without being given full or adequate information as she did not know she was being tested for Hepatitis C.

14. I do not know if she was tested for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. My mother suffered from chronic fatigue, depression, anxiety and arthritis.

16. In 2004 my mother was diagnosed with liver cancer and was treated at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle where she received radiotherapy.

17. It is strange that my mother was not offered any treatment specifically for the Hepatitis C and she carried on having routine blood tests after she was diagnosed but there were periods where nothing happened. If there was a treatment available I believe she should have been offered it.

18. The radiotherapy affected my mother a lot. She was weak, frightened, and had severe mood swings after the treatment. Before the radiotherapy she was still weak and depressed but she was still able to get out of bed. Day to day life was really hard at times.

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19. My stepfather left my mother before she was diagnosed with Hepatitis C. Her periods of depression and anxiety stopped her socialising, and eventually my step father could not take anymore and left. I lost a father figure and my mother lost a husband.
20. My sister and I were her carers for a long time, even when we were children. It was a difficult time. I always had to be there for her as she needed help and support. We had to do all the cooking, cleaning, shopping and washing.
21. I have two sons and they lost their grandmother. It was difficult to bring up my own family at the same time as caring for my mother. My mother moved in with my husband and I, when my son had just been born. My mother had sold the family home so she had no where to go for a many months until she found a flat.
22. There was a lot of ignorance among friends and family members because Hepatitis C is not properly understood.. There were comments made about my mother's 'bad life style'. Some friends and family members disappeared from our lives and near the end of my mothers life she did not want to see anyone either.
23. Even though I tried to do what I could, I felt guilty because my sister had to give up a lot of her life to look after our mother. My mothers infected status had a serious impact on my sister's life as well.
24. My mother's infected status also had a financial impact on our lives. Money was always tight but when my step father left it was really difficult. I tried to help as much as I could.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

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25. I do not think my mother received proper support. There are many time gaps between diagnoses, blood tests and the radiotherapy and there was no treatment for the Hepatitis C

26. Neither my mother or I were offered any counselling or psychological support when she was diagnosed or when she died.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

27. We found out about financial assistance from a consultant at the Freeman Hospital.

28. My mother received an initial payment of £20,000 and a Stage 2 payment of £25,000 from the Skipton Fund.

29. My sister and I received another payment after my mother's death. I cannot remember all the details but I believe it was in 2014 and was for the amount of £25,000 to be split between both my sister and myself.

30. Professor Basindine assisted with filling out the forms to apply to the Skipton Fund so there were no difficulties or preconditions that I can remember.

31. I cannot comment about whether the amount we received was adequate as when it is the death of a loved one you cannot put a price on their life.

Section 8. Other Issues

32. I believe that the NHS should have told my mother as soon as there was any suspicion that the blood may have been contaminated. They must have had a database which had the records available so this information should have been shared with those who were infected and their families.

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33. Many lives have been destroyed. It does not just affect those who were infected, it affected my whole family. My mothers infected status and ultimately her death will have a long lasting impact.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

34. I wish to be anonymous and I do not want to give oral evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated.....

28/3/19