

Witness Name: Joyce Olszewski

Statement No: WITN25240001

Dated: 19th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JOYCE OLSZEWSKI

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 12th December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, Joyce Olszewski, will say as follows: -

1. Introduction

1. My name is Joyce Olszewski. My date of birth is GRO-C 1950 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I intend to discuss my husband, Antoni Olszewski's, infection of Hepatitis C and how it has impacted on him, myself and my family.

2. How Infected

1. My husband had an accident in February 1986, when he was hit by a train. I remember getting a phone call from the hospital saying that he had had an accident on his bike and I needed to go the Neath and Port Talbot Hospital. It turned out he had been hit by a train. They could not get the blood into him

fast enough. I remember his mother rushing in to see him as we thought he wouldn't survive.

2. Years later in or around 1998, we went to donate blood. I worked in a doctor's surgery in Neath at that time and gave blood often. I remember a couple of days after we had given blood my husband found out he had chronic hepatitis C. We were told this was from his accident when he had received 35+ units of blood in surgery.

3. Other infections

1. I am not aware my husband had any other infections other than Hepatitis C.

4. Consent

1. As my husband's accident was so severe, there was no time for him to consent to the transfusions. If they had not been given straight away, he would have died.

5. Impact

1. My family have suffered due to his hepatitis C. As a result of the infection, and the not knowing for 12 years, my husband was depressed. The greatest impact was on our family, as it turned my husband into someone else and we did not know why for such a long time.
2. When he would get ill from the hepatitis C he was so ill he could not do much at all. He could not even make himself a cup of tea. He used to be a placid man and not knowing what was making him so ill, so frequently, massively changed him and hurt us.
3. His temper was the worst. I remember on one occasion he smashed the kitchen up. The children, particularly my eldest son Christian, was terrified of him. The children did not know or understand what was happening to their

dad. My son Christian ran away on one occasion,

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4. I left and went to a women's refuge at one point (before diagnosis) with the children. Frequently I would go and stay at my sister's home with them when they were young to get out of his way. Only my husband's mother could get him to calm down. I would have to call her to do this often. They were only short spells when he was sick, but they were awful. The hardest part of this, is that my children had no understanding of what was happening to him, and we did not even know either at this time.
5. I know we did not have the illness, but it was so hard for the family watching him suffer and the person it turned him into. We knew it was not his fault as he was so weak and ill. I have been through so much stress with this that I have had an ECG recently as I have been having stress-induced heart palpitations.
6. When my husband did find out about his condition, it did not make things better for long, as he was told there was no cure. My husband was offered no counselling and was constantly waiting to see if he would survive. He was told he was dying.
7. When he was receiving the injections treatment for 48 weeks, it was horrendous. At one point he left and went to his mother's home. We did not know where he was. It had been so hard at home. I was happy he was gone. It was never ending. The infection reminded me of cancer, with constant worry and not knowing if it is going to come back.
8. We went on holiday to Barbados after we were told the injection treatment had worked. We wanted to celebrate. When came home, he developed a chest infection and was really ill, so he was sent for more blood tests. He was told the chronic hepatitis c was back and it felt to both of us like being kicked in the stomach.
9. He finally received walk in treatment 2 years ago for physiotherapy. The emotional damage that the infection has done is still ongoing. He still has to

take a letter written by David Lake, his Doctor, at Port Talbot Hospital explaining what happened to him to any medical appointments so they are aware of his medical condition. It has affected not just my kids' childhood but also the relationship he has with his grandchildren. We have a grandson GRO-C GRO-C and he needs a lot of attention. When he runs away from us, my husband cannot run after him because his illness has left him too weak. He is gasping all the time and cannot cope because of his brittle bones GRO-C
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GRO-C My husband has always gotten on with things, but the worries or the impact never go away.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. He would go into hospital or have a GP visit whenever the hepatitis c made him sick with a cold or a chest infection, and they would give him drugs for that.
2. He had injection treatment as referenced in the impact section. This did not work.
3. He received treatment one day, as a random selection, like the lottery. This was 98% effective, and this is what cured him 2 years ago.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I am not sure what pay-outs my husband has received. I remember my husband receiving something from the Skipton fund but I am unsure as to what. My husband has all that information.

8. Other Issues

1. My husband recently GRO-C was unwell, but the GP did not allow him a blood test. This is not right. It is very difficult to get to see a doctor at the moment and it still worries me that the infection will come back.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-C: Joyce Olszewski

Dated.

19/2/2019.