

Witness Name: Kevin O'Sullivan
Statement No: WITN2661001
Dated: 18th March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KEVIN O'SULLIVAN

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, Kevin O'Sullivan will say as follows:-

1. Introduction

1. My name is Kevin O'Sullivan. My date of birth is GRO-C 1971. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am the son and one of the carers for my father Anthony O'Sullivan who was infected with Hepatitis C (HCV) and Hepatitis B (HBV) through contaminated blood.

2. How Affected

1. My father was born with severe Haemophilia type A. In his medical notes it says that he was given various blood products from the late 1950's until the early 1980's such as Haemophil, Kryobulin, Profilate and Cryoprecipitate. He was also

given Factor VIII, plasma and a blood transfusion. It was during his home treatments and stays at the Royal Victoria Hospital and City Hospital in Belfast in the 1980's that he contracted Hepatitis C and B. He was under the care of Doctor Elizabeth Mayne.

2. Myself and my siblings didn't know a lot about my father's infection back then so most of the information I have comes from his medical notes. He kept a lot of information from us because he felt he couldn't tell anyone. He did eventually tell my sister he had the infection about 9 or 10 years ago.

GRO-C

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3. From what I know now, I don't think the information that he was given to manage the infection was adequate. He wasn't informed of the risks involved with the treatment. The doctors claimed that the risks were explained to my father, but that never happened.

3. Other infections

1. To my knowledge, my father didn't have any other infections apart from Hepatitis B and C.
2. He received a letter from Belfast City Hospital in 2004 telling him that he was at risk of having vCJD.

4. Consent

1. He was definitely tested without his knowledge, consent or without being given adequate and full information.

5. Impact

1. The infection had a huge mental impact on my father and his life. His whole mental attitude changed. He started drinking a lot and the effects of his drinking had an impact on family life. Physically, he had a lot of bleeds as a result of his drinking. I think the drinking was his way of dealing with it by himself.
2. His bleeds caused him to be in hospital more. It was a snowball effect. This definitely caused a lot of medical complications, although I'm not sure exactly what those medical complications were as they are all in his notes.
3. My father's infection badly affected his and my mother's marriage. I think he was pulling away from her because of what happened. They were always arguing and this impacted the quality of family life in a lot of ways. The way my father acted towards her was hard to see especially being the close-knit Catholic family we are. We stuck together. I believe my father didn't want his children to be infected; that's why he pulled away so much. At the time we couldn't understand why my father he was so angry.
4. In regards to stigma, I know that at the time there was a lot of fear with the HIV thing. The media had a big influence on people's attitudes towards it. The media tended to put the blame on gay people for HIV and the infected blood scandal. My father probably picked up on that. He blamed the gay community.
5. This affected his relationship with my brother [GRO-C]. I'm not surprised as [GRO-C] was a big part of my brother's life and who he was. My brother went to university in England and never came back. He felt he couldn't. He still hasn't formally told my father that [GRO-C].
6. My father had to give up work as a Publican at the time. This was because he couldn't stand for very long as his joints were too bad. We just thought it was his Haemophilia. We didn't know that it was linked to his Hepatitis B and C. He spent a lot more time in the hospital.

7. In regards to myself and school, this likely suffered because my mother and father were fighting all the time. I'm not quite sure to what extent as it was a long time ago.
8. No counselling or psychological support has been offered.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. It was Doctor Mayne who told my father that he was infected. When he started on the treatment for Hepatitis C in February 1995, I don't think my father fully understood what the effects or consequences of it would be. My father was diagnosed with both Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B a few months later in December 1995.
2. He had a brother who died of Hepatitis C through contaminated blood and I know that had a big impact on my father.
3. As for any obstacles in accessing treatment, I don't have that information as my father didn't tell us anything. Any information on this would be in his medical notes although they're not even in chronological order.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I know that there was a single payment he got at one time from the Skipton Fund. He told my sister what it was for. As soon as he received the money he didn't keep it, he gave it to his children. I don't think he even wanted it. I know that there was another Fund set up to distribute payments but he didn't receive any money from them. I think this was down to Doctor Mayne and also the stigma of his infection. I don't think he's had anything apart from that one off payment.

8. Other Issues

1. There's not a lot on the news about the infected blood scandal. People seemed to have forgotten about it. It's been swept it under the carpet.
2. There are obviously people still working in the medical profession who knew about it. Those people should be held accountable. The doctors involved go and get their big pensions despite having destroyed so many lives. They shouldn't be allowed to get away with it. I believe that the authorities are putting money in front of lives.
3. It's been really hard for myself and my siblings because we were kept so much in the dark. Because of my father's physical and mental condition at the moment he's not going to get any real closure from it. It's all about the truth now.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Dated.

18-3-19