

Witness Name: May McCormick

Statement No.: WITN2675001

Exhibits: **WITN2675002**

Dated: 25th January 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MAY MCCORMICK

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

I, May McCormick, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

- 1 My name is May McCormick. My date of birth is GRO-C 1949. My address is known to the Inquiry. I will be retiring in March 2019. I am currently employed as a care assistant in private nursing. I am widowed and I lost my husband 23 years ago, his name was Charles Martin McCormick. I am giving a statement with regards to my mother Mary Street, whose maiden name was Lauder - Gavin. Her date of birth was GRO-C 1927 and her date of death was GRO-C GRO-C 1999. In particular, the nature of her illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment received and the impact it had on her and our lives together.

Section 2. How Affected

2. My mum was infected with a transfusion as far as I believe. She had a steel valve put on her heart. I believe she received the transfusion during this. My mum was a warfarin patient which is a blood thinning product. This would stop her blood clotting. My mum suffered several bleeds on her brain some years following her heart surgery.
3. I am unsure when this operation was. It may have been the 80s but could also have been the early 90s. My mum lived in sheltered housing and she was in and out of hospital due to bleeding due to her warfarin treatment.
4. I believe that at some point they had to put dye through her blood due to her heart operation. This would have been at Glasgow Royal infirmary but I do not know the doctors names. I do not know any other time my mum would have received blood products. I think my mums operation may have been on 17th November 1977.
5. I think my mum was diagnosed with hepatitis C a couple of years before she died. As far as I'm aware she received a letter saying that she had been given blood products and may have been infected. I recall that she had to go in for a liver scan in the year before her death. The first time she went the scanner was not in hospital and the second time she went it was not working. There was a third letter received arranging for my mum going in for a liver scan which was received after she died.
6. My mum never said what advice was given to her about hepatitis C. I do not know if she was given adequate information. She may have raised questions with her own doctor but none of this was

communicated to me. Her doctor is based at the GP surgery in GRO-C in GRO-C and his name was Dr Martin Wilson. I do believe my mum should have been told sooner than when she was. I believe that they caused unnecessary suffering. I do not know if my mum knew how hepatitis C was passed on.

7. I was on holiday, at my mum's insistence, in Spain when she died. I remember my son Martin phoning while I was away and there was something about the undertaker not knowing about her having hepatitis C. Due to this her coffin was sealed and I was unable to see her on my return.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. My mum was diagnosed only with hepatitis C, as far as I'm aware.

Section 4. Consent

9. My mum had her blood checked quite regularly and this was because she was a warfarin patient. It may be it could be in her records that she may have been tested earlier. She could very well have been tested for it prior to when she was told. I did phone her Doctor after her death regarding hepatitis C but got nowhere.

Section 5. Impact

10. My mum would just describe some days as 'yucky days'. She would have stomach pains and always felt cold. I believe this could, at least in terms of always being cold, down to the warfarin that she was on. My mum couldn't remember things and could forget words when she was talking. I believe that other people call this brain fog. This could also have been down to her advanced age at that time. I also recall at one time my mum had a sore head and got the warden because it was a sore head that she had had for a week. My mum was a lively

person and we had to call for the doctors to come. They discovered that she had a bleed on the brain. They had detected three or four bleeds. My mum was often tired and could sleep at the drop of a hat. She was not the sort of person to just lie back and do nothing, aside from her ability to fall asleep. She was the sort that would just get up and get on with things.

11. I do not know if my mum actually managed to have any liver scans. I definitely thought she had problems with her liver and she seemed to be quite squeamish and had tenderness as far as I remember. My mum did not have any signs of Alzheimer's or dementia at the time she died. My mum was retired at the time of her operation where she had the blood product and did not work again throughout the rest of her treatment.
12. I am not aware of my mum having received any treatment but she was not good at telling us all things. When she went for her brain operation, they had to wean her off warfarin. I do not know what replacement they used. You have to balance out what the warfarin does. I think it's almost like being a haemophiliac when you're on warfarin. My mum was quite ill around the time of her diagnosis but she was not housebound. She always came for dinner on a Sunday. My mum ended up going into sheltered housing quite young and was one of the youngest in her sheltered housing. I remember towards the end she looked like she had shrunk.
13. My mum's memory was good generally but she was 72 when she passed. She had lost a lot of weight just the look of food at times made her feel very sick.
14. My mum suffered from a heart condition due to scarlet fever, diagnosed when she was a child. The dye process was prior to the heart surgery to identify the problem aggravated by the hot summer. I

believe that the year she died was a particularly hot summer, I think this was 1976, this also did not help matters.

15. I'm not aware of my mum's hepatitis C having any effect on medical treatment. I remember when she was on the warfarin they tried cauterising a wound and that was horrible. I recall at one time they put a scope down my mum's throat and that also caused a bleed. My mum went into cross house for 2 days at one point and was kept for two weeks.
16. My mum was a social person in her sheltered housing and would often sit with the older ones who were there. She didn't feel well a lot of the time so she did not travel very far.
17. In terms of family life, my mum had two children. Her first great-grandchild was born in the GRO-C of the year she passed. My brother passed after my mum passed. My mum could only really see the children if she was brought over to see them. She was never fit to drive. My dad passed in around 1979. My son Martin was born in 1972. I believe my mum retired from her work when my dad was found to be suffering from rheumatoid arthritis so she stopped to look after him.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

18. I do not think my mum would have taken counselling even if it was offered.
19. I have no idea who my mum told about her hepatitis C. I assumed she told the staff in sheltered housing. I do not think she was really aware of the stigma around hepatitis C. I think a lot of it was down to a lack of understanding. I believe my mum thought it was just one more thing on top of other health complaints she had.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

20. Mum never had financial support. I wrote to Skipton a couple of years ago and I felt quite hurt by their response. They said that my mum had passed too soon and there was nothing that could be done.
21. There is a letter that was sent to Thompsons solicitors stating that my mother's medical notes have been destroyed. I produce a copy of this letter in evidence and identify it as **WITN2675002**.

Section 8. Other Issues

22. I have no other issues I wish to raise.
23. I do not wish 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

04/08/2019.