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INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

EXHIBIT WITN1021009

Hospital Aids probe on little boy's death

A haemophilic youngster who died in Birmingham Children's Hospital was treated with a blood clotting agent containing Aids antibodies, it was revealed today.

Strict health precautions were imposed today as tests began to try and find whether the incurable illness — or some other illness — killed the little boy.

The death, revealed in last night's Express and Star, is Birmingham's first related to the disease reported to the city coroner, although there has been one previous fatal case.

Neither the coroner's office nor the Ladywood hospital would disclose the victim's name, age or address.

Dr Frank Hill, director of the hospital's haemophilic unit, said today: "We need to be sure of the exact cause of death to say with certainty whether exposure to the virus has contributed."

Dr Hill said it was likely the youngster contracted antibodies before precautionary measures started in December 1984.

Infection

Since then, all batches of the clotting agent Factor 8 have been subjected to heat treatment eliminating the virus.

And since last autumn, all blood donations have been screened for Aids and recent statistics showed no positive results locally.

Dr Hill said the child who died acquired the antibodies from treatment with Factor 8 concentrate and had recently been admitted to the hospital.

"At the moment we cannot say exactly what caused death or whether the known previous infection with the Aids virus has contributed at all."

Coroner's officer Inspector Colin Clarke said there will be a post mortem and the decision on whether to hold an inquest will depend on the results of tests.

He added: "It is a fact that a young person contracted Aids while being given treatment as a haemophilic. There is no suggestion of any sexual transmission."

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1986

Aids theory over death

A suspected case of death from Aids was this afternoon being investigated in Birmingham.

It would be the first death from the killer virus reported to the city coroner.

There has been one previous death related to Aids but no inquest was held.

Inspector Colin Clarke, at Birmingham Coroner's office, confirmed that the death of a young person in the city, believed to be from Aids, had been reported.

A post-mortem examination would be held and tests carried out to confirm the cause of death.

On the basis of those results the coroner, Dr Richard Whittington, will decide whether to hold an inquest.

Treatment

The coroner's department has refused to give any further details of the victim but it is believed to be a man having treatment for haemophilia.

Inspector Clarke said the virus might have been contracted during the course of treatment.

No further details about the person who died, the home address or the place of death, are being released.

Inspector Clarke said: "We have no further comment to make in the interests of the family. If tests turn out to be negative there is unlikely to be an inquest."

The victim is believed to have contracted the virus during transfusion.

Figures released by West Midlands Regional Health Authority six months ago revealed that at least 7 people in the area had contracted Aids.

24 EXPRESS AND STAR, FRIDAY, MAY 16, 1986

Aids virus 'not to blame'

Aids virus is now not thought to have contributed to the death of a haemophilic boy in Birmingham Children's Hospital.

The unnamed victim, who died earlier this week, was understood to have been treated with a blood clotting agent containing antibodies of the killer disease.

A post mortem has shown that the cause of death was a chest infection following bleeding into the brain, which can occur spontaneously, associated with the child's existing condition.

City coroner's officer Inspector Colin Clarke said today: "Tests are being carried out but it appears that it is now most unlikely the Aids virus was a contributory factor in this death, and as such, is a natural cause."

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"Unless the tests show anything unusual, there will be no inquest," he added. Results of the tests are expected to be known next Tuesday or Wednesday.

The post mortem on Wednesday night was performed at the central mortuary by Home Office pathologist Dr Peter Acland with Dr Norman Flewitt, in charge of the regional viral unit at East Birmingham Hospital, present.

Batches of the clotting agent are now heat-treated as a precaution against Aids with all blood donations screened since last autumn.