

Witness Name: S A Kusnierek

Statement No: WITN3516001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: September 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SIMON ANDREW KUSNIEREK

I, Simon Andrew Kusnierek will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Simon Andrew Kusnierek and I was born on GRO-C 1978.
I live at GRO-C, London, GRO-C. My mother, Michelle, has also provided a witness statement for the Inquiry.
2. I make this statement as an affected son of my late father, Alan Edmund Kusnierek, who was born on GRO-C 1953 and passed away aged 51 on 23rd April 2005 as a result of receiving contaminated blood transfusions.
3. My late father was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood transfusions.
4. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

5. My father had a condition called Medullary Sponge Kidney which is a congenital disorder of the kidneys characterised by cystic dilation of the collecting tubules in one or both kidneys. He had numerous episodes of kidney stones and experienced excruciating pain. My father was therefore frequently in and out of hospital. He received a number of blood transfusions, during surgical procedures, at South Mead Hospital in Bristol during the 1980s. I am unsure of the name of his main consultant.
6. As far as I am aware my father was not given any information or advice regarding the risks of receiving blood transfusions.
7. My father did not find out about his Hepatitis C infection until July 2004, which was only about 9 months before he passed away. He had been seeing numerous kidney specialists and further investigations and referrals were taking place in relation to why his blood was not clotting. I recall that a new doctor took one look at my father's hands and asked whether he had been tested for Hepatitis C. In both mine and my mother's view, my father had been completely overlooked by the hospital in terms of not only his Hepatitis C but also in relation to the way in which his kidney condition was managed and dealt with.
8. The diagnosis came back that my father had Hepatitis C. I am unsure as to exactly how he was told or what was said to him but I recall that he was put onto the liver transplant list and was told that the wait for a new liver would be about 6 months.
9. It sounds strange but we actually thought that my father getting a new liver could actually signal a fresh start for him; away from all of the pain and multiple health problems that had plagued him throughout his life.
10. Unbeknown to any of us, including my father, he had been battling Hepatitis C for many years and finding out about this diagnosis actually meant that we

had some sort of explanation for the numerous health problems and constant pain which my father had so quietly and bravely endured.

11. My father underwent the liver transplant in March 2005 at the Birmingham Royal Infirmary (BRI). Unfortunately he was given a poor quality liver which meant that his body rejected it almost immediately, despite the fact that he was on a high dose of immunosuppressive drugs. My father then contracted a type of MRSA and ultimately died from complete organ failure.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. As far as I am aware my father was not exposed to any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

13. I don't think that my father was tested, treated or used for the purposes of research without his knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact

14. My father was a very sick and poorly man who ended up having to take Pethidine on a daily basis for the pain. It was really hard to understand and decipher where his kidney illness ended and where his Hepatitis C started.
15. The Hepatitis C diagnosis potentially answered a lot of questions because my father should not have been having the pain and symptoms he was from the kidney problems alone.
16. My father was a very strong man who never let his low mood or depression show. So many people admired him because he had this ability to get on with life despite the constant pain he was in. He never felt sorry for himself or moaned. His strength of character and resilience was astounding.
17. My father was a very good artist and the most wonderful father to me.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

18. I never attended hospital appointments with my father so am unable to answer this question. I do know that my father had a very good relationship with his dentist though. My father had to have all of his teeth removed prior to the liver transplant.
19. Neither my father nor any of our family were offered any counselling or psychological support.
20. The resounding theme throughout my father's many interactions with the NHS was one of neglect. The NHS failed to properly diagnose, manage or treat my father in connection with his many health problems.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21. Neither my father nor any member of my family received any support from the Skipton Fund or the EIBSS.

Section 8. Other Issues

22. It is difficult to put into words what I want from this Inquiry. I want to be involved to help those who have been infected and affected by this tragedy.

Anonymity

23. I do not want to apply for anonymity and, if required, I am prepared to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Date

19.9.19