

Witness Name: Keith Turner
Statement No.: WITN4068001
Exhibits: Nil
Dated: 12 August 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KEITH TURNER

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 26 February 2020.

I, Keith Turner, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Keith Turner. My date of birth is GRO C 1950 and my address is GRO C. I intend to speak about my infection with herpes. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me. I should say that the Inquiry investigator taking my statement has explained to me that Herpes is not one of the infections that fall within the Terms of Reference of the Infected Blood Inquiry. However, I have been given the opportunity to have my statement taken and I do wish to provide one.
2. I have three grown up children, and I am a widower. I now live with a friend who is my companion. I am retired, having previously been a

HGV and construction plant driver. I then had a business with my wife selling freshly squeezed oranges.

Section 2. How Infected

3. In my youth I was a boxer. I was boxing one night at Main Hall, Gravesend, on 16 October 1973. I remember this because I was driving to Hildenborough Manor on the day before, 15 October. At 7.45am in the morning I had a head-on collision with another car.
4. I was rushed to hospital. My skull was split, my vision was blurry and I was boss-eyed for three months after. Both my ear drums were perforated and I was bleeding out of my nose and ears. On the x-ray theatre my lung collapsed and I was unable to breath.
5. This initial stay in hospital lasted two months, during which I had a number of operations on my knees. Throughout this period I had three blood transfusions. I do not know how much blood I was given in total.
6. Around 3 or 4 months later I went back to hospital for a further operation on my knee. I had another blood transfusion at this time. Dr Mayer at Pembury Hospital operated on my knee. I remember them saying that I needed 5 or 6 pints of blood.
7. When I came out of hospital I continued boxing trained and returned to full fitness. Almost immediately my herpes infection became apparent. I had a blemish, and then white spots. I had white spots on my penis on the outside and inside of my urethra, identical to cold sores, and the pain was excruciating. I had no sexual or physical contact with anyone that I could have caught it from. Before my accident, I had a long-term girlfriend and had not been with any other sexual partner. I am confident that neither had she.

8. Once my herpes outbreak began after leaving hospital, I went to see my GP in Gravesend. My GP diagnosed me with herpes. I was advised not to touch my eyes and to wash my hands thoroughly. I now know that stress causes me to have further outbreaks. The doctor gave me tablets, and within 4 or 5 days the outbreak had gone, though it would have gone anyway in that time. Every 3 or 4 months an outbreak returned, and this was often brought on by stress or anxiety. I was not infectious to my girlfriend whilst I did not have an outbreak. When I did have an outbreak, I abstained from sex. At this stage I had no idea that a blood transfusion could have been the cause of my infection.
9. I saw an article in the Daily Mirror that Dr Gordon Skinner was trialling a new drug that could treat herpes. I wrote to him during the 1980s. At this time I was having regular outbreaks.
10. I then saw Dr Skinner at the Cromwell Hospital in London during the 1980s. The first time I saw him, he asked me a lot of questions about my infection. One of the questions he asked me was whether I had ever been given blood. I explained to him about my accident in 1973 and how I had been transfused with a lot of blood. Dr Gordon Skinner later explained to me that I could not suffer from herpes in two different places, i.e. in the upper and lower regions at the same time. I was also told not to touch my eyes.
11. Dr Skinner gave me an injection around two to three times a year, and gave me tablets. When I was receiving these injections, my outbreaks completely cleared up. He also gave my then-wife an injection as a precautionary measure. I saw Dr Skinner regularly for around 10 years at various places. After this, at some stage in the 1990s, his funds were withdrawn by the government and I stopped seeing him. I loved Dr Skinner for all he did to help me. He was a very nice man.
12. When his funds were withdrawn, I was upset. After he stopped treating me, I began to have small outbreaks. I visited the sexual health clinic at

Dartford Hospital and they could not help me. They gave me cream and there was nothing else they could do.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I do not believe that I have any other infections as a result of receiving blood transfusions.

Section 4. Consent

14. I was not advised that I would need a blood transfusion, and I was not informed of the risks of receiving a blood transfusion.

Section 5. Impact

15. Herpes is a dreadful disease. Outbreaks can come at any time, but in particular when I get upset, stressed or worried. The worry affects my life every day. I try to control things, though the herpes causes me to have mood swings. When I'm on the verge of an outbreak I fill up with rage.

16. I can go for three or four months without having an outbreak, then all of a sudden it can flare up again. It is a constant worry in my mind. This completely drains me. When an outbreak flares up, I am fatigued and have no strength. I am fed up with it all.

17. The NHS has called me a liar on the basis that I am saying that my infection was caused by a blood transfusion. I am frustrated by this and the fact that I am not believed.

18. If I had an outbreak when I was working, I became very quiet. I still managed to work during an outbreak.

19.I have had to live all my life with this horrendous disease. It should never have happened.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

20.I was offered counselling by my GP but I do not see how this would benefit me.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21.I have never applied for financial assistance. I am not aware of any trusts, schemes or funds for infected blood victims.

22.I receive Personal Independence Payments and Disability Living Allowance.

Section 8. Other Issues

23.I would not be here today unless I had heard on a BBC news report about the infected blood inquiry, a female doctor say that AIDS, hepatitis C and herpes were part of the inquiry's investigations.

24.I do not expect anything from anybody. I deserve better after all I have endured.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO C

Dated

12/8/2020