

Witness Name: Feyona McFarlane

Statement No.: WITN1935001

Exhibits: WITN1935002 –
WITN1935017

Dated: 18 November 2019

EXHIBIT WITN1935009

The Lothian University Hospitals NHS Trust



Ms Feyona McFarlane

GRO-C

RG/RAF

261157/1583

17 August 1999

Dictated: 17 August 1999

Dear Feyona

Dr Sutcliffe

Thank you for your letter of 4 August 1999. First of all I apologise that our department accidentally sent out your GP's letter to yourself. I am sorry that this has caused you distress but there is nothing in your GP's letter which I would not be happy for you to read. I am saddened that you feel that at consultations you are being humoured or that your questions are not answered honestly. I can assure you that that is not the case but I take on board your comments regarding your feelings and I can only apologise if this is how it has seemed.

With regard to a few of your specific comments. Regarding any questioning of your alcohol intake, obviously as you know we have never discussed this ourselves at any consultation. I certainly do not include alcohol in your list of diagnosis and have made no reference to it in your GP's recent letter.

With regard to the use of venesections and haemochromatosis I accept that your symptoms of fatigue and joint pains are better when your iron levels are low. It is true that people with genetic haemochromatosis also often report an improvement in their symptoms. I had hoped that what I had conveyed during our conversation was that I thought it was unlikely that you had genetic haemochromatosis and therefore could not recommend venesection as a medical treatment. I myself am not aware of any research reporting an improvement in symptoms in patients with other forms of liver disease with venesection or any other association with iron stores. If you do have any information regarding this I would be very interested and would be grateful for a copy. You are quite right that people with hepatitis C virus are sometimes also found to have other causes of liver disease in association. I think however we have looked very hard in your case and specifically there has been no evidence of haemochromatosis. However as you know I did check your blood for the genetic test and have enclosed another administration letter which I had been planning to send you (I am afraid our administration typing is slightly behind hence the delay).

With regard to the management of your headaches. I know that your symptoms do become much worse round about your period and obviously the liver is closely involved in its production of hormones. However we as hepatologists have little treatment available to manage this problem and I have to say little expertise in the management of headaches. I know that you are awaiting to see a neurologist and I think that this is important to see if there is any other cause of your headaches. I hope that a suitable treatment can be found to ease your symptoms as I appreciate that they have a huge

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impact on your life. We would be happy to advise on the possible effects of any treatment on your liver but I have to confess that I think this is the limit of our expertise in the management of headaches.

Once again I apologise that you were sent your GP's letter and I am sorry that your symptoms are so severe at present. I know that you have an appointment at Professor Hayes's clinic at the end of the month. I will not be at that appointment unless for some untoward reason Professor Hayes is unable to attend and I am called on to cover the clinic. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

Dr Ruth Gillespie
Specialist Registrar to Professor Hayes

cc Dr A S Sutherland ✓
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