

Witness Name: JOHN GARNER

Statement No: WITN4550001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: AUGUST 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JOHN GARNER

I, JOHN GARNER, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is John Garner. I was born on GRO-C 1973 and I live at GRO-C
GRO-C Leeds GRO-C
2. My father, Alan Garner (born on GRO-C 1941), is infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from contaminated Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father has mild haemophilia A with a clotting factor of 25% at the time of infection. Clotting levels can increase over time and his levels are now in the low normal range.
5. My father was treated at the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield under the care of Professor Preston and Professor Makris (Professor Makris exclusively from the 1980s when Professor Preston retired).
6. As a mild haemophiliac my father had very little (hardly any) treatment. He had cryoprecipitate at Sheffield and a dose of the FVIII product BPL on just one occasion at the Queens Medical Centre (QMC), Nottingham in 1979. On that occasion the ambulance was diverted from Sheffield to Nottingham after an accident wherein he had put his hand through a caravan window. It was never confirmed but it is his belief that he became infected from the BPL treatment that he had in 1979 at QMC.
7. My father was informed by Professor Makris in or around 1988 that he was infected with HCV from FVIII.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I do not believe that my father received any other infections besides HCV.

Section 4. Consent

9. My father was not told that he was being tested for HCV.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

10. Having a parent with a potentially life threatening disease is clearly traumatic and has affected my family life in numerous ways. In the early days post diagnosis, this manifested itself most noticeably with my mother. She would often break down in tears at the prospect of losing my father. She already had a dependant mother (who lived with us) and the combination of this, caring for two children who were going through exams and my father's illness really took it's toll on her. Looking back, there should have been more care given to the families affected by this illness to help them cope. I am not aware of any support whatsoever.
11. My father tried to shelter the family from the nature of his illness and the impact of his life but it was clear that his energy levels and outlook changed. Both my parents were forced to retire very early and had to be very careful financially (before and after retirement). My father tried to undertake part time work to bolster his income (supply teaching), but he could not cope with the demands.
12. Whilst I believe that children should endeavour to take part time jobs when they are old enough, both me and my sister worked significant and very late hours throughout our 'A' levels and did not achieve the results we might have had had we focused more time on our studies. This is perhaps most relevant to my sister (albeit we both materially under performed). Our parents also had to support us both through University and, as retired parents, they sacrificed the things you would normally expect a retired couple to do in retirement.
13. The impact of the numerous drug treatments my father had to undertake were debilitating and had a serious impact upon his quality of life and the things we could do together as a family. I know it was a wrench every time he embarked on a new treatment and an utter disappointment every time they failed. The final treatment was particularly debilitating and I know he considered quitting at various stages. We are lucky that he was so determined to try each new drug.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

14. For me, the lack of support for our family (especially my mum) was unacceptable. I feel that we have all been let down in terms of our health and our (financial and psychological) quality of life. It was bad enough that my father was given an infected blood product but the total lack of support is unacceptable.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

15. I am unable to comment on the financial assistance my father has received through the various Trusts and Funds set up to distribute payments. As stated, having HCV has seriously impacted my father's financial situation as it was instrumental in him retiring early.

Section 8. Other Issues


16. There are no other issues.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

17. I have no concerns with regard to anonymity and I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry. I do not wish to give oral evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed 
Dated ... 27/8/2020