

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN5652001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: May 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I, GRO-B, will say as follows

:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B
2. My mother, GRO-B: M (born on GRO-B) was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate and an Anti-D immunoglobulin injection both of which were infected.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access my mother's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My mother had to undergo a caesarean at the West London Hospital (formerly known as the Hammersmith Hospital) in GRO-B She consequently lost a lot of

blood and was given FVIII treatment and an Anti-D immunoglobulin injection (then recommended for pregnant mothers who have GRO-B GRO-B)

5. My mother was first informed of the HCV diagnosis sometime in the early to mid GRO-B in GRO-B. No doctor in the GRO-B ever recognised her condition as HCV notwithstanding the fact that she had been very unwell for at least 10 of the 20 years or so she had been infected. No information or advice was given to her about the risk of being exposed to infections from blood products.

Section 3. Other Infections

6. I do not think that my mother was infected with anything other than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

7. My mother thinks she was tested without her knowledge and consent and without adequate or full information. Her infection should have been picked up in the UK after giving birth to my GRO-B in GRO-B. She was pregnant again with me in GRO-B and I was also a caesarean birth. Her infection should have been picked up then at least.
8. I have been refused a test by my GP many times over the years, including several times recently. I have been told that 'I do not need one'. I find this particularly strange, as my mother gave birth to me in GRO-B which is clearly after she was infected with HCV. I am not a doctor, but I feel that surely where there is a possibility, however small, that my mother could have passed the infection on to me, I should be tested. There has been in the past and still clearly is a large effort being made to NOT test me for this disease. I have recently paid privately for an HCV test and am awaiting the result.

Section 5. Impact

9. This infection destroyed our family and much of my childhood leading to a breakdown between my parents and also between myself and my mother. For several years I did not see her or speak to her. This debilitating disease that took away all my mother's energy and positive character directly led to a broken home as our mother fell apart, for a reason no-one knew of at the time.
10. It affected me greatly as a young child and then as a young adult growing up, in effect without a mother for some time, and led to years where I believed that my mother did not love her children, myself included, and did not want to be there for us. This all greatly affected my confidence and mental health in my teenage years and gave rise to reckless behaviour that was damaging to my life, especially at the time. How can a child love themselves if they feel their mother doesn't love them? In reality, she did still love her children, she was just too ill and too tired all the time to take the everyday effort a parent has to make just to be a good parent.
11. Clearly we had no idea that she had been infected with HCV, a disease that has brought so much pain to so many people and families, all for what seems to be a very careless and negligent mistake made by authorities our society should be able to trust. I find it shockingly confusing how the NHS and GPs in the UK did not pick this up or even try a hepatitis C test, when my mother was clearly suffering. Yet the doctors in GRO-B managed to work out what was going on incredible quickly. The UK health system had all my mother's medical history, which include the infected blood transfusion, yet she was left to suffer and her family torn apart. It was left to another country's health system to find out and, thankfully, save my mother before it was too late. She would likely be dead if it was left up to the UK health system, like I suspect so many other victims of this misconduct are. Why was she not contacted by the UK government before? Were they waiting for her to die? This either points to a worrying negligence by the UK health system or a complete lack of care for the personal individual damage caused to so many people's lives by this blood scandal. Probably both.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

12. Nobody was offered any counselling or support. My mother was eventually given HCV clearing treatment over a number of years in GRO-B It was an experimental treatment provided by a chemotherapy specialist. She had her final dose in or around GRO-B and is, thus far, clear of the virus.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

13. I am not aware of any financial assistance being given.

Anonymity

14. I would like to apply for anonymity, and I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed. GRO-B

Dated. 5/5/2021