

Witness Name: Emily Frances Wilcock

Statement No: **WITN0677001**

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 16 May 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF EMILY FRANCES WILCOCK

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 13 May 2019.

I, Emily Frances Wilcock, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Emily Frances Wilcock; I prefer to be known as Frances. My date of birth is GRO-C 1931 I am 88. I live at GRO-C
GRO-C. I am married to Dudley. We have one son, a grandson and step grandson. I am a retired legal secretary, having worked for a firm of solicitors in Leeds for a number of years, until I gave birth to our son in 1961. Dudley was an ironmonger, but retired at the age of 59 after a GRO-C I have lived in GRO-C
GRO-C for over 50 years.
2. I intend to speak about my late mother Isabella Sugden, DOB, GRO-C
GRO-C 1898, She died in May 1990. We didn't know it at the time but she had been infected with the Hepatitis C virus ("HCV"), as a result of being given infected blood through a blood transfusion.

3. In particular, I intend to discuss how I found out my mother was infected with Hepatitis C, which developed into cirrhosis of the liver.
4. I confirm that I have chosen not to be legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to assist me with my statement. My husband assists me.

Section 2. How Infected

5. My memory of what happened to my mother is somewhat blurred, as I have recently been ill and the passage of time. I do have copies of her medical notes and death certificate, but have been unable to locate for the interview. My sister Jean Margaret Ball would know the precise date of mother's operation.
6. My mother was a housewife and looked after her 4 children and husband. She lived across the road from the house we currently reside in.
7. I completed the expression of interest form on 1st October 2018. I note that I wrote that my mother was admitted to Airedale General Hospital in Steeton for an operation to remove a gallstone in the mid eighties. It stated on her medical notes that she received a blood transfusion during the procedure. As far as my memory recalls that was the case.
8. Prior to the operation, mother had always been a very healthy woman and cared for her eldest son, George. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia at an early age. When our father, Harry passed away in the 1970s, she promised him that she would continue to care for George which she did up to her death.
9. In May 1990, my mother passed away at Airedale General Hospital, having been in hospital for some time. The death certificate stated the cause of death as HCV and cirrhosis of the liver, yet none of the family knew she had contracted the infection.

10. I do recall the doctor asking mother during an appointment whether she had been a heavy drinker, to which she replied no. In hindsight, the doctor must have known about the infection at that point, but did not inform mother or any of the family. She attended the doctors' practice at GRO-C GRO-C but it is no longer there.
11. I have been asked whether my mother had any tattoos or piercings, and the answer is no. She never travelled abroad.
12. My mother never donated blood.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. As far as I am aware my mother did not contract any other infections as a result of being given a blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

14. With reference to consent, my mother underwent an operation to remove gallstones, and from what I understand she would have consented to this and the procedures that followed.

Section 5. Impact

15. To my knowledge, mother had no physical impact from the infection and I do not recall her complaining of being tired or of any other side effects. She continued to attend her social club every Thursday, and had many friends.
16. Shortly before she passed away, mother came to live with us for approximately 6 weeks. She had been on holiday with my sister and had taken ill, so I offered her to stay with us afterwards.

17. According to her death certificate, the infection with HCV had caused cirrhosis of the liver. As a family, we did not know of this until mother had passed away. Mother led a very homely life, the only way she could have contracted the virus was as a result of her operation. Unfortunately I cannot remember exactly when she had the operation. My understanding was that no post mortem examination was carried out.
18. As far as I am aware there was never any offer of treatment to clear the virus, as a family we only discovered that she been infected after she died.
19. Dudley and I were in Austria at the time of mother's death. Our son phoned up to inform my husband, who then broke the news to me. Although I was shocked and upset, mother had been ill in hospital for sometime and had faith in God. I knew she would not be frightened of death and I found comfort in the fact that she was no longer in pain.
20. My brother John managed the funeral arrangements, and appointed the Co-op in Bradford as funeral directors. Whilst he planned the funeral, John did not attend. Mother was buried in Bradford, and her house sold shortly after.
21. There was no reason why mother should not have lived longer, had she not been infected with HCV. She was a very astute, determined woman and on the face of it in good health.
22. As mother was unaware of the infection, it did not affect her or the family in anyway. She coped well financially and there were no work related affects. After our father's death, she continued to receive half of his police pension, and she received an attendance allowance as George's carer.
23. John arranged residential care for George after mother died, however he passed away not long after at the age of 70 due to his heavy smoking,

George had a leg amputated and was in a wheel chair, smoking was a contributing factor in his amputation.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

24. I have been asked if we ever received any psychological support or counselling, and the answer is no. Due to the circumstances under which my mother died, it was not relevant.
25. None of the consultants or doctors at the hospital explained the cause of her death to me. I was very surprised to find out that she had died of Cirrhosis and Hepatitis C.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. We did not apply for or receive any financial assistance due to the fact that mother's diagnosis was only discovered by us after her death.

Section 8. Other Issues

27. I have made this statement completely from memory. Somewhere in the house we have some of my mothers medical records and also her death certificate. I have recently been unwell and we have had to change the layout of our living accommodation. As a result we have been in a bit of upheaval and the aforementioned documents have been misplaced. If I find them I will make them available to the inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-C

Dated:

16th MAY 2019