

Witness Name: CLARE EMMA DOROTHY LAITY

Statement No: WITN1336001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: APRIL 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CLARE EMMA DOROTHY LAITY

I, Clare Emma Dorothy Laity, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Clare Emma Dorothy Laity. I was born on GRO-C 1972 and I live at GRO-C, Cornwall GRO-C.
2. My father, Jeffrey Arthur Smith (born on GRO-C 1937) was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from contaminated blood products. He died from liver cancer on 19th April 1917 aged 80.
3. My family have given their own witness statements to the Inquiry (Witness Numbers WITN1611001, WITN1453001, WITN1530001 and GRO-B).
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

5. My father had mild hemophilia A. He was diagnosed with it from birth. Haemophilia ran in his family. My 8 year old son has mild haemophilia too.
6. My father was treated at the Truro Haemophilia Centre, The Royal Cornwall (Treliske) Hospital, under the care of Dr Helena Daly and Dr Desmond Creagh. My father only needed Factor VIII (FVIII) treatment and never at home. My father was treated with FVIII at dental appointments on occasions when for example teeth removal was required and therefore needing a visit to the hospital dental department and also during the various operations he had over the years.
7. My father was told that he had HCV by a junior doctor at hospital in the late 1980s or the early 1990s. The junior doctor announced the news in a casual manner, thinking that my father already knew. The doctor did not know that my father had been given a contaminated blood product and had become infected with HCV in that way.
8. My father was not given any information or advice beforehand about the risk of exposure to infection from contaminated blood products. When my parents told me how they had found out about my father's HCV diagnosis, they both conveyed to me how shocked they were at what had happened to him.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I do not believe that my father received any other infection than HCV through infected blood products.

Section 4. Consent

10. My father was identified as having HCV but did not know about the test and the positive result. He did not provide his consent to being tested. Conversely he knew and agreed to tests for HIV/AIDS in the late 1980s/early 1990s. I do not know how often my father was tested for HIV/AIDS I only know that he had been tested. As the youngest of four siblings I was not told anything about my father's HCV diagnosis and the HIV/AIDS concerns until when I was probably in my twenties or early thirties (although I am uncertain of an exact time). It was a while before my parents told any of us about that my father was at risk of HIV.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

11. My father had interferon clearing treatment which was unsuccessful and made him very sick. I possibly remember him self-injecting. I also remember my mother saying "Dad is trying Interferon and it is not agreeing with him, it is not working". It was at that time that it began to sink in just how serious my father's infection was.

12. I remember my father having a mild stroke and being very worried about him, due to the bleed on the brain.. He was however a very capable and stoic man. He just got on with things. He worked hard, did things around the house and went off caravanning. He was always a very cheery, upbeat person. That was his way of dealing with it. He may have been different behind closed doors and in private.

13. My father had a variety of hospital appointments and tests and scans. He told us that he had cirrhosis but I do not remember any detailed discussion about it, and I only found out about from what I read on the internet. To me, it felt like he was here one minute and gone the next.

14. I am devastated at the loss of my father, as are my siblings and my two children. My father was a grandfather to 9 children and would have been a great

grandfather to 4. My mother and father were married for 59 years. My son and daughter miss their grandad. My son recently said to me how much he misses his grandad. I told him that I miss 'grandad' too and have promised to ask his granny for a photo for him to put beside his bed so that he can remember him.

15. My father was a wonderful, well-loved man and he had nothing but love and pride in his family. I miss him dreadfully and often get tearful about the way his life came to an end.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

16. I do not believe my father was offered any counselling or psychological support. He just got on with it.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

17. My father was a kind and generous man. He gave each of his children £1,000 from his first capital payment from the Skipton Fund. I do not believe he had any issues with the Skipton Fund.

Section 8. Other Issues

18. My father had so much more to give. I wanted him to here for longer.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

19. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity and that I understand this Statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry. I am not willing to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-C

Dated 7th May 2019