

Witness Name: Clare Foyer

Statement No.: WITN3570002

Exhibits: WITN3570003

Dated: 9.10.2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CLARE ELIZABETH FOYER

I provide this further supplementary statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 16 July 2019.

I, Clare Elizabeth Foyer, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Clare Elizabeth Foyer. My date of birth is GRO-C1961 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I have a partner and three children.
2. I wish to make this supplementary statement in addition to my statement, dated 17 September 2019. I wish to provide information in relation to my mother's *post-mortem*, which was not in my possession at the time in which my initial statement was drafted.

Section 8. Other Issues

3. The circumstances surrounding my mother's illness and death are detailed in my initial statement to the Inquiry. To briefly summarise; my mother had her gallbladder removed in 1982. The operation incurred several complications, for which she was given a blood transfusion. I believe that it is from this operation that she contracted Hepatitis C (HCV).
4. My sister Christine and I have been informed by the NHS authorities in Scunthorpe and Birmingham that our mother's medical records have been destroyed. Nevertheless, since we made our initial statement, we have located mum's *post-mortem*, dated 19 July 1990. This is exhibited at **WITN3570003** and was undertaken by a consultant pathologist, Dr GRO-D at Scunthorpe General Hospital.
5. When I first gave evidence to the inquiry, I forgot about the existence of my mother's *post-mortem*. It had been in my father's possession for years and subsequently it was in my sister's, Christine. I had mum's death certificate and her diaries but I didn't have this. Because it wasn't physically in my possession, I simply forgot that it existed. When my mother died, I probably saw it briefly, but I didn't wish to see it again. I was still grieving over her death and it was, and it still remains very upsetting to read: the contents are very raw and detailed.
6. In fact, I did not read the *post-mortem* in any great detail until very recently. I do not know why it was conducted but I assume that there must have been a question about the cause of my mother's death. The consultant pathologist concluded that she died from natural causes. I acknowledge the benefit of hindsight, and that I am making observations some years after it was written. I believe that I was too overwhelmed with grief at the time to even recognise some of the incongruities which I will now go on to discuss.

7. I have noticed that the *post-mortem* records in detail the presence, condition or absence of a number of organs and tissues such as, the lungs, bronchi, heart, spleen and kidneys. Mum's uterus and ovaries are recorded as absent. This was correct as she had a hysterectomy in 1985. However, the *post-mortem* fails to record or even mention the presence, condition or absence of mum's gallbladder.
8. As mum's cause of death was hepatic failure and cirrhosis of the liver, I would have expected the consultant pathologist Dr GRO-D to have taken particular care to examine and accurately record the organs and tissues in the gastrointestinal system. I have puzzled over his failure to record mum's gallbladder as absent. Why was this error made, when care had been taken to record organs and tissues in other parts of the body? It is clear from the initial comments that Dr GRO-D had access to mum's medical notes. He or She would have read that mum's gallbladder was removed in an operation at Scunthorpe General Hospital in September 1982, of which there were complications resulting in at least one emergency transfusion.
9. I do not believe that the failure to record the absence of mum's gallbladder was merely a mistake or an oversight on the part of the pathologist. It is my contention that this omission was prompted by the pathologist's reading of mum's medical notes.
10. At the time that mum's *post-mortem* was written in 1990, questions were being asked by the public about the safety of blood products including the risks of hepatitis. I suspect that the pathologist didn't want to draw attention to gallbladder operation and subsequent emergency transfusions, so a decision was taken not to include any record of it in the *post-mortem*. Questions would then not be raised about the operation itself, how it was conducted, and the possibility that mum's HCV infection may have resulted from the transfusions.
11. I believe that the *post-mortem* is important evidence in mum's case. Mum's gallbladder operation was the only time that she received blood.

it was from this blood that I believe she contracted HCV. In my opinion, this omission is significant. When I examined the *post-mortem*, I was merely looking for the facts. The omission of this important detail is such as to give an incorrect picture of the circumstances surrounding my mother's illness and death.

12. Mum's medical notes have now been destroyed. I believe that her diaries do provide a clear and legitimate record of what was happening in the days and the hours immediately before her gallbladder operation, i.e. that her blood was not clotting. I wonder whether a misjudgment was made in sending her for an operation when they did, and whether mistakes were made.
13. It is extremely disappointing that mum's medical notes have been destroyed because questions I have will remain unanswered. The lack of medical records has caused me to speculate on a number of aspects of mum's care. They are speculations, however, the fact remains that things were not well done. A serious lack of direct communication and explanation from professionals throughout mum's care has undermined any sense of trust and confidence I had in the medical profession.
14. Reading mum's post-mortem has highlighted for me the rapidity with which mum's illness progressed, from Hepatitis infection in 1982 to diagnosis of cirrhosis in 1985, when the Hepatitis C infection appears to have burnt out. I cannot understand why mum wasn't referred to a liver specialist hospital at this stage or even earlier. Why wasn't she offered a liver transplant or put on a waiting list? The appropriateness of this, or any other treatments wasn't even discussed with herself or our family. I feel that mum was let down by the medical profession. Quite simply, her life wasn't considered important enough.
15. If possible, I would like a medical expert to examine my statements with the hope of shedding light on some key decisions made in my

mum's medical treatments and care. I would also like them to review her *post-mortem*. I do not expect answers but any thing that would help my understanding of what happened to my mum would be appreciated.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____ GRO-C _____

Dated 9.10.2021