

Witness Name: TAMMI SMITH

Statement No: WITN6416001

Exhibits: WITN6416002

Dated: JULY 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TAMMI SMITH

I, TAMMI SMITH, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Tammi Smith. I was born on GRO-C 1976 and I live at GRO-C
GRO-C Surrey GRO-C
2. My father, Stewart Smith (born on GRO-C 1942) was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products. He died on 9th August 2019, aged 77.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to a full set of my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father (Dad) had mild Haemophilia A. He was under the care of St Thomas' Hospital, London (STH) and had all his routine appointments there. Dad had an operation on his back in late 1980/early 1981 and was later told

that he had become infected with HCV through the contaminated Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate treatment he was given at that time. I am not sure how he found out, but I believe it was quite some time after becoming infected, possibly the early 1990s. My parents separated in 1986 when I was 10 years old. GRO-C when Dad found out and I believe that I was then in my mid-teens.

5. I do not know what information or advice Dad was given to help him manage the infection. He was attending his routine appointments more frequently in the 2000s, he received the EIBSS Stage 1 payment and carried on working after he retired as a Civil Servant. When Dad was in his mid-sixties he travelled to Thailand and started living there for several months of the year. Dad ensured that he was always back in the UK to attend his appointments at St Thomas' Hospital. He wasn't offered any HCV clearing treatment until in or around late 2015. Dad was told that he would need a six-month course of treatment (and that there was a 90% chance of clearing it), but the offer of treatment was retracted when he returned to the UK from Thailand to start the treatment in March 2016 because he didn't live in the UK permanently. Dad appears to have been discharged from St Thomas' Hospital and was left devastated. He felt very let down by the NHS and the Government. His Consultant, Dr Graham Thompson had passed away and there was no follow up for him except for a recommendation that he should have tests and scans which he tried to access but ended up doing in Thailand. I refer to Exhibit WITN6416002 being a copy letter from his GP to STH dated 11th June 2019 asking that he be seen 'at the earliest opportunity' after being 'lost to follow-up'.
6. Dad wasn't given the care and attention he deserved. He was infected with HCV through no fault of his own in 1980 and was left without any hope of a cure until 2015 despite regular hospital check-ups at STH where he had been infected. Dad did not journey to Thailand until he was in his mid-sixties and still attended his appointments in the UK. Dad was told that he had raised

enhanced liver fibrosis in 2013. My sisters and I are left devastated that Dad was denied his one opportunity to cure the HCV before his liver worsened, having worked and paid taxes in the UK his whole life and having been wrongly and shamefully abandoned by STH in his hour of need.

Section 3. Other Infections

7. I do not believe that Dad was infected with anything other than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

8. I do not believe that Dad was given any warning as to risk of infection through FVIII treatment.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

9. I am eldest daughter of four, all born two years apart. I was little when our father was infected with HCV. Once he learned of the infection, my sisters and I became aware that it was a constant worry to him. It affected his potential to find a future partner (they GRO-C needed to be tested) as well as his health. Dad suffered with a number of ailments and his health worsened.
10. Dad was told that he had liver damage and signs of the onset of cirrhosis in 2013. He was devastated to be refused the antiviral clearing treatment he had been offered when he arrived in London for the treatment in March 2016, but he wasn't told how bad his liver was then.
11. It really bothered Dad that he had HCV. He was embarrassed by it. It was associated with HIV and he was worried that people thought it was to do with drugs and/or that the issues with his liver were drink related.

12. By the beginning of 2019, Dad had lost a lot of weight and muscle mass. Dad had tests (to include scans) in Thailand but they were unable to pinpoint any particular reason for his deteriorating health and the language barrier didn't help. When he came home in May 2019, Dad thought he had a bug and his GP said he needed a liver scan asap based on blood tests she had taken. However, the doctor didn't stress how bad Dad's liver was and Dad just thought the HCV condition was worsening and the doctor said she would be writing to St Thomas's Hospital to complain to them that they were under a duty of care to see Dad (and had failed in that duty). Dad had also just been refused the Stage 2 Skipton Fund payment.

13. Dad returned to Thailand in on 30th June 2019 and on 5th August we received a message from Dad telling us that he needed an operation to clear a bowel obstruction that was going to cost him thousands. When I spoke to Dad, he told me that he needed to get home for urgent treatment and had booked a flight for 9th August. From the blood tests and scans he had had in Thailand, they had ruled out liver metastasis (even though 10 lesions had been identified on a previous scan). Dad told me that he was very yellow, that the palms of his hands were bright red and he was having trouble breathing.

14. Dad was unable to walk. He needed arrangements for wheelchair assistance to be provided at Bangkok Airport as well as the support of a friend to get him there. Dad messaged me that day to say he would talk to me when he arrived at the airport. Dad died on that journey to the airport, halfway there. He told his friend that he couldn't move and collapsed when they stopped for Dad to use the toilet. The ambulance arrived and tried to resuscitate him for 45 minutes.

15. My sisters and I were in shock to learn of our father's death. We still are because we couldn't have Dad's body returned to England and he was cremated in Thailand without us being able to say goodbye. We never got the

answers we needed as the Death Certificate was translated twice differently. One said that Dad had a gut obstruction metastatic cancer and the other said obstruction due to advanced liver cancer.

16. We lost our Dad in such tragic circumstances. Had he had the antiviral treatments, we believe he would be here today and if St Thomas' Hospital seen Dad in his final years, he would have had the chance of cancer treatment. Dad didn't know how serious it was for him.
17. My Dad died without knowing anything about the Infected Blood Inquiry. No-one has ever apologised for his poor treatment (and lack of monitoring for 3 years) and neglect and someone should be held accountable. He was let down by professional people that he should trust.
18. Dad was the funniest person you could ever hope to meet. He was a Welshman and he had a dry wit, taking offence about something but in a funny, playful way. We would fall about laughing and he'd respond by giving us a strange look as if to say 'you're mad'. He doted on his children and his grandchildren. He loved football and was a Chelsea season ticket holder and he liked a bit of a gamble on the races. He was a nice, soft, funny, six foot gentle giant and he had the biggest hands you ever saw on someone. His fingers were so big he always hit the wrong keys and we got funny jumbled messages as a result, but that was just him. We'd help him and/or laugh. He was so proud of his grandchildren and they loved him because he was funny and silly. He always sent them lovely Facebook messages. The amount of condolences we received from Thailand was immense. The men at the pub there threw a party in his honour when he died and sent us the videos.
19. GRO-C had to have counselling when Dad died. It was all so sudden. He had dinner with us on 29th June and I took him to the airport on the 30th and we never saw him again. He would never allow us to park up at the airport to drop him as he didn't want us to waste our money on the car park charges. I had such a weird feeling that last time, a sort of premonition that I

needed to park up and get out of the car to see him off. I kept saying to my daughter 'I need to get out of the car and see him off'. He was a big man, but he looked older this time and frail and I had a sick feeling inside as I watched him turn and leave.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

20. The treatment, care and support provided to my father was inadequate at best and criminally negligent at worst. None of us were offered counselling before or after Dad's death.

21. I was tested for HCV but only after my father died. I am a haemophilia carrier (as is one other of my sisters). We have a FVIII deficiency and I had a blood product transfusion in the early 1990s.

GRO-C

GRO-C

Section 7. Financial Assistance

22. Dad received the Stage One ex gratia payment of £20,000. He was refused Stage Two Skipton Fund payment in 2019 (no apparent proof of cirrhosis). We are trying to appeal that decision, but with great difficulty as EIBSS state that there is no evidence that his liver cancer wasn't secondary to the colon cancer rather than the other way around (not helped by the Death Certificate debacle). The doctors in Thailand told Dad's wife that the cause of death was advanced liver cancer and kidney failure and they do not keep records of these things for long there.

Section 8. Other Issues

23. Some of Dad's medical records are missing. The letter Dad received refusing him clearing treatment (at the last minute) because he didn't live in the UK for more than 4 months each year is missing.

24. There is a note in Dad's medical records stating that he 'failed to attend' the appointment made for him at STH in October 2019. He was of course dead by that date.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

25. I do not seek anonymity and understand that this Statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

Dated.....

23/7/21