

Witness Name: Wendy Wilson

Statement No.: WITN4745001

Exhibits: N/A

Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF WENDY WILSON

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 9 November 2020.

I, Wendy Wilson, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. Name: Wendy Gladys Lancaster Wilson (Née Churchill)
2. Address: GRO-C
3. Date of Birth: GRO-C 1938
4. Education and Qualifications:
 - 4.1. December 1956: Passed all 5 subjects at Senior at the Brisbane Girls Grammar School. Intending to follow a Medical Science degree, but it was discontinued that year so I did a part time course in Medical, Veterinary and Agricultural Science at the Queensland Institute of Science and Technology. This took 6 years attending evening lectures – 4 hours a night, 4 nights a week for 6 years, while working 08h30 to 05h30 during the day. I qualified in December 1962.

5. Employment

5.1. January 1957 – December 1959: Department of Bacteriology, Medical School, University of Queensland

5.2. January 1960 – December 1962: Pathology Department, Brisbane Hospital. Queensland

5.2.1. Working in Haematology, Blood Bank, Biochemistry and Histopathology

5.3. March 1963 – May 1963: Haematology Laboratory, Royal Free Hospital. Gray's Inn Road and Lawn Road, Hampstead

5.4. September 1963: I joined the new Register for Professions Supplementary to Medicine. This recognised my Australian qualifications and enabled me to be employed as a Senior Technician

5.5. September 1963 – October 1964: Senior Technician in Haematology and Blood Bank, Royal Free Hospital, Lawn Road, Hampstead. I organised the department with support from an off-site pathologist. There were 5 trainee Technicians. I set up extra tests. During the Summer of 1964 Dr Dormandy commenced work at the Royal Free from Great Ormond Street, she brought 3 patients with her, lads of 12+. Numbers rapidly increased and the work interested me. I left in September to visit family in Australia with the intention to return to the Royal Free Hospital.

5.6. February 1965 to August 1975:

5.6.1. On my return I took up the post of Research Technician to Dr Dormandy. My early days were spent setting up all the diagnostic tests required, learning about various concentrates available for treatment. We worked long days and nights.

- 5.6.2. The available concentrate was prepared by the Lister Institute, England. It was difficult to obtain and not very powerful. When patients required surgery we transferred them to the Churchill Hospital, Oxford and I spent my time there monitoring the patient and learning how they managed them.
- 5.6.3. Dr Dormandy was a very awe inspiring person, she wanted the best and only the best for her patients and she worked very hard to provide it for them. She inspired everyone she came into contact with particularly all who worked with her. The constant worry was the lack of highly concentrated Factors VIII and IX especially as the supply from the Lister Institute was very irregular and eventually it was not made. In the late 1960's it became unobtainable.
- 5.6.4. There was an internationally available Factor VIII Concentrate from human donor blood, obtained from people in prison, people living on the streets and all of them paid for the donation by the USA Government.
- 5.6.5. About this time Dr Dormandy went to an International Conference at Berkley, San Francisco, she met with Judith Pool who had done the initial work on Cryoprecipitate from fresh donor blood. We had a copy of her paper and I tried to prepare some, but found it almost impossible to spin blood in bottles at 1000 RPM – most broke filling the centrifuge with blood and broken glass.
- 5.6.6. Dr Dormandy obtained free packs of plastic bags from the three suppliers- Australian: Tuta Bags; French made bags and Baxter Bags from the USA. The later became the ones of choice and to this day are used in the UK Transfusion Service. We made a list of donors, obtained from relatives of patients, volunteers from the local police station, staff and others. A number of these were

plasmapheresis donors. From these donations I made cryoprecipitate, most of it was stockpiled, stored frozen, ready for emergency treatment or for dental extractions and operations.

- 5.6.7. I know that in the late 1960's and early 1970's Dr Dormandy had an appointment with the Minister of Health, requesting a change in the Blood Transfusion Service to the use of plastic bags. They said it would be too expensive and that they needed to know exactly how many bags would be used each year. Strangely the 3 makers of plastic bags all paid Imperial Chemical Industries ("ICI") royalties for the plastic formulas. The formulas for the plastic bags were the property of ICI so it would have been easy for a UK manufacturer to make bags, and Dr. Dormandy had spoken to plastic manufactures but the Ministers of Health always said they thought it would be too costly to do anything about it. Cost was always the reason that Cryoprecipitate was not manufactured in bulk in this country.
- 5.6.8. Dr Dormandy was always concerned after a visit to the Minister of Health that his only concern was the cost and the change of workings in the country. I was amazed to find that the Minister was not Medical Doctor (and it is still a nonsense to me especially after the last 12 months).
- 5.6.9. We bled the donors in the caravan or on a bed belonging to an Ambulatory Patient.
- 5.6.10. Baxter gifted the Haemophilia Centre a large quantity of bags so we set up experimentally to make cryoprecipitate with the Edgware Blood Bank. I spent time there supervising them making the concentrate. A paper was published in the BMJ on the success of the collaboration and this continued into the mid to late 1970's.

- 5.6.11. Towards the end of 1973 we had to move out of the Centre in Hampstead to make way for the New Hospital. We were housed in a shop looking out onto Gray's Inn Road opposite the Old Royal Free Hospital. The facilities were difficult and I could no longer bleed donors but we did receive donations from the Blood Bank that I turned into cryoprecipitate, often working into the evening to do it.
- 5.6.12. We moved into the new RFH in the Spring of 1975. I left in August 1975 to marry a widower with four children and came to live in GRO-C GRO-C miles from the Royal Free, so my previous life style of working day and night was impossible and I lost touch with the Centre when Doctor Dormandy sadly died in GRO-A 1978 having been ill for several years.
- 5.6.13. When the Government first mentioned using imported concentrates as an alternative to making or buying plastic bags to prepare our own concentrates Dr Dormandy and the other Centre Directors (Dr C.Rizza, Oxford; Dr R Hardisty, GOSH; Dr I Ingram, St Thomas's to name a few) were shocked and hoped they never needed to use it. The ministers of Health could not understand that the USA paid their donors and so the blood was a poorer quality than when it was given for free. The medical concern was the transference of infections – AIDS had recently been identified, hepatitis was always a concern – and then Hepatitis C had not been diagnosed as a separate form of Hepatitis. We knew that AIDS and Hepatitis (at that point it was just one disease it had not been divided into subgroups) were known to be contaminants of transfused blood, and both were known to be prevalent in USA blood donations because the donations were paid for and it was regarded by some as a way to earn money. Many of these donors were intravenous drug users and lived on the edge of society. Also the concentrate was made from very large pools of Plasma this enabled more patients to become infected.

5.6.14. Dr Dormandy was always worried about the future for the young ones. She tried to keep their joints mobile and she encouraged many to go to the Lord Mayor Treloar School where they were medically cared for and given an excellent education.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

30th April 2021