

Witness Name: Samantha Facer

Statement No: WITN2748001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: May 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SAMANTHA FACER

I, Samantha Facer will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Samantha Facer. I was born on [GRO-C] 1980. I live at [GRO-C] [GRO-C] Birmingham, [GRO-C] I live with my husband, Gary Facer and my two children [GRO-C] (aged 4) and [GRO-C] (aged 1).
2. I make this statement on behalf of my late mother, Maria Anne Connor. She was born on the [GRO-C] 1959 and died on the [GRO-C] 2009, aged 50 as a result of Hepatitis C (Hep C).
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late mother's medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My mother received a blood transfusion at Solihull Hospital whilst having an emergency caesarean section, on [GRO-C] 1980, upon giving birth to me.

5. My mother had spoken to me regarding the Hep C and never advised me that she was given any advice beforehand about the risk of being exposed to infection from the blood transfusion. As it was an emergency C section it was unlikely that she received advice beforehand.
6. As a result of being given contaminated blood during the transfusion my mother was infected with Hep C.
7. My mother told me that she knew nothing about the blood transfusion until she came around from the anesthetic. She was extremely ill and, as a practicing Catholic, had the priest over her reading her last rights.
8. I do not know when my mother found out about the infection or who told her.
9. I do not know if my mother was given any information or advice about the infection.
10. Neither my mother nor my father spoke as to what risks followed with being infected with Hep C. However my mother did not have any more children and she did say she would have liked to.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. I do not know if my mother received any other infections besides Hep C.

Section 4. Consent

12. I believe my mother was infected without her knowledge, consent and without being given adequate information. I do not think my parents would have agreed to purposely infect my mother with unscreened blood products.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

13. My mother suffered from jaundice to the eyes, itching of her hands and feet, and fluid retention in her feet and ankles. She used to say that the itching felt like her 'blood was boiling'. My mother's fatigue was so extreme that she was not able to carry out tasks like gardening. She could not do physical activities

with me either because she would get too tired. She seemed to sleep everyday, not for long periods, but she would need a short nap everyday because she felt drained. Moreover, my mother could not exercise because of her tiredness; this resulted in her gaining weight. This was hard for my mum as she was always a slim lady, so when she started gaining weight, it made her feel down.

14. My mother developed vitiligo. I asked her how she was diagnosed with vitiligo (as it did not run in the family) and she thought it was because of the Hep C. I do not think she was given any medication for the vitiligo.

15. I do not know what treatment my mother received for the Hep C. My mother only ever told me that she was given some medication but she was discharged from the hospital after 7 years and the medication had stopped. I do not know if when she said 'they discharged her' she meant she stopped having regular check-ups in relation to the infection. She did say that after 7 years she was just left to it. At an older age I have no recollection of my mother taking medication for her infection.

16. Her infection flared up in 2008 and I recall a doctor telling my mother that she should have never been discharged in the first place and she needed to be on some kind of medication. I am not sure if she was given any medication for the Hep C at that stage.

17. I do not think my mother ever cleared the Hep C. She was still tired and still had jaundice near the end of her life.

18. As my mother was so ill when she gave birth to me she did not get to see me for nearly a month. She lost the bond between us that we should have had. My mother said she was so weak she was put in a wheel chair to see me. She also never had the chance to breastfeed. My mother did not have the bond with me that she should have had when I was born due to being so ill and I believe it got worse when she contracted the Hep C. This resulted in me receiving no physical affection from her. I was never told by her that she loved

me. This has affected me in all aspects of my life. I have difficulty in letting people get close to me.

19. Not knowing why my mother was infected has made me an angry person. I have never got answers to my questions in relation to the infection and that is always frustrating. I am also angry that my mother died needlessly. It has left me feeling lost, vulnerable and cheated of the time I should have had with her.

20. I do not believe that my mother was affected by the stigma associated with Hep C because at the time I believe that a lot of people did not know what Hep C was. We kept my mother's diagnosis a secret.

21. The impact of my mother's death has left a terrible void. My two children do not have grandparents and my mother did not even survive to see me get married. My family were very fond of my mother and she was well liked. Family members still breakdown when speaking about my mother. My grandmother, who is 91 years of age, is still alive and had to bury her only daughter.

22. My mother passing away destroyed my father. He ended up drinking heavily and eventually he drank himself to death after she passed away. My father passed away in 2017.

23. I believe that my mother's infection slightly affected her job. She worked a office base job because she would get so tired doing anything else. She could have never had a job which involved standing up for long periods.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

24. My mother had bad fluid retention several times in her life. She was told on more than one occasion that it was common in women her age. When she went to the doctors she was just fobbed off. However, I now know that it was because of the Hep C. About 10 months to a year before her death she had bad water retention in her face. I told her to see a female doctor and this was when she was told that the water retention to her face was because she had Hep C. She was given different tablets to try and help with the condition.

25. No care or support was ever offered to me, my mother or my father.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. I am not aware if my mother received any financial assistance.

Section 8. Other Issues

27. My father requested my mother's medical records a few years after her death but he was told they had been destroyed.

28. For years my father was approaching solicitors attempting to instigate an investigation into the scandal. His attempts proved unsuccessful and he was turned away. I now wish to take over his efforts.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

29. 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.

30. I do not wish 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

28 MAY 2019 .