

Final version

MINUTES FROM A MEETING WITH C [REDACTED] W [REDACTED]

Date 26.11.02 at 15.30
Place Trust Headquarters
Attending Mrs C [REDACTED] W [REDACTED]
Mr S [REDACTED] W [REDACTED]
Mrs Kathleen Sawyer
Dr Colin Taylor
Mrs Lisa Wickham

Introductions

Mrs W [REDACTED] had sent in a letter stating 12 questions that she wanted the Trust to address. Dr Taylor had been supplied with a copy of this letter.

We started to go through the questions in order that they had been stated in her letter.

1. Dr Taylor stated that all the medical notes were intact and these included the notes of her treatment from 15.12. to 18.12.1982. Dr Taylor showed the actual notes that were in front of him. Mrs W [REDACTED] agreed that she was also in possession of a copy of these notes. Dr Taylor read from the nursing documentation that he had seen Mrs W [REDACTED] twice during her hospital stay. Mrs W [REDACTED] disputed this and said that she had never met Dr Taylor before.

Mrs W [REDACTED] asked to see the computerised records of the actual blood products used at the time? Dr Taylor explained that the computerised records and Patch numbers were not matched to each patient and attached to their individual notes. The practice was changed in 1984. Dr Taylor explained that this was the common practice in most of the hospitals in the country, at that stage.

Mrs W [REDACTED] stated that a working party was set in 1978 to look at the problems related to administration of blood products and this party's recommendations were for better records. Why did it take until 1984 for this to be implemented? Dr Taylor explained that he was involved in changing the practice in this hospital. We have Patch numbers from 1977 but they are not matched to any individual patient.

We would supply the information if we could. We are not hiding anything from her.

Mrs W [REDACTED] was very upset that she had lost her future prospects in nursing due to her illness.

She is very keen to identify where the products came from.

Mrs W [REDACTED] wants to know, and asked Lisa to find out who got rid of the records?

2. Already answered.

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3. Mrs W asked Dr Taylor if he was concerned about using the products in the light of the new research, and that trials were carried out on the livers of chimpanzees?

He explained that he was aware of research, but at the time they had to use whatever was the best available material. They had to make an assessment of every individual case at the time in order to treat the patient.

Mrs W stated that she had not been told about the risks involved and that this limited her choice of either having this treatment or refusing it. Dr Taylor apologised if he had not discussed the actual risks with her, but he could not remember as far back as nearly 20 years.

Dr Taylor explained that the purpose of the treatment was to stop bleeding. Each patient is treated as an individual and if there is a risk of bleeding the pros and cons are weighed up. In Mrs W's case there was a high risk of bleeding around the spinal cord and had that occurred it could have led to a paralysis. Mrs W explained that she would rather have taken that chance if she had known of the risks of possibly getting Hepatitis and the rest of the illnesses. She felt that her choice was removed.

Mrs W felt that Dr Taylor had ignored the advice given by Dr Goodman.

Mrs W talked about research done in America and Europe. A copy of some research done 1977 was given to Dr Taylor.

Dr Taylor shared his agonising over making difficult decisions, and having to use whatever was available.

He also stated that there are possibilities that old plasma products could be found to cause other problems and were not as effective at achieving satisfactory factor levels.

6. The products were purchased after all options were sought. Haemophilia specialists were involved in decision making.

Mrs W felt that if the haemophiliacs had known the risks involved in having these products they would not have allowed them to be used. Dr Taylor explained that all risk issues have to be taken into an account, but then there has to be benefits verses risk assessment made at each individual time. Mrs W reminded Dr Taylor of his duty to inform patients of any risks.

Mrs W wants to know how long are the purchasing records kept for pharmaceutical products?

7. Mrs W read from a book by Douglas Star regarding his comments. All plasma products came from the USA. There has been a massive increase in HIV in the last 20 years.

Dr Taylor explained again that Patch number records were correlated to each individual patient after 1984.

All artificial products are used now.

Mrs W wanted to know why Dr Taylor did not follow her up after her admission to the hospital? Dr Taylor explained that he was only asked to look after her while she was a patient at the hospital, but as far as he was concerned her continuing care remained with the Royal Free hospital. Mrs W explained that she had been violently ill following her admission and felt that Dr Taylor should have followed her up. This is certainly not Dr Taylor's view.

11. Mrs W wanted to know where the hospital bought the products and was Dr Taylor directly responsible for buying these products?

The products were bought at the time using the most appropriate information available to the hospital.

Mrs W pointed out that there was a World In Action documentary in 1975 highlighting all the possible problems and dangers.

Dr Taylor felt that the alternative products on the market did not appear to be any better or without their risks.

Mrs W told us that Dr Davis Owen recommended (1974) that we should be self-sufficient. The Government of the day did not act on his recommendations.

Mrs W pointed out that there are several criminal investigations into destroyed files and that the Ombudsman is investigating some cases. Mrs W stated that Dr Taylor had not given satisfactory answers and her husband agreed.

Dr Taylor pointed out that this was a national problem and that we had given them all the information that we had and we certainly were not hiding anything from them.

Dr Taylor stated that no product is 100% safe and we have to act at any time using the most up to date and available information, it is always easy to talk about issues in hindsight.

Mrs W stated that she would be taking her case forward.

LW/paw/27/11/02