

Witness Name: J M Jones
Statement No: WITN3627001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: May 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JESSICA MARY JONES

I, Jessica Mary Jones, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Jessica Mary Jones of [GRO-C]
Wales [GRO-C] I was born on [GRO-C] 1980.
2. I own and manage a hair salon and my husband also works. Last year our 4
year old son [GRO-C]
[GRO-C] However, life had
become somewhat chaotic prior to the advent of Covid 19 so I do feel that the
enforced lockdown which ensued brought its own silver lining for my family.
3. I prepare this witness statement as the affected daughter of my late father,
Ronald North, who was born on [GRO-C] 1950, and passed away in
August 2013 as a result of contracting Hepatitis C via contaminated blood
products.
4. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
late father's medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

5. My father had mild Haemophilia B for which he required treatment with Factor IX concentrates.
6. Despite the fact that my father was classed as a "*mild Haemophiliac*", he used to end up in hospital a couple of times per month when he was younger, usually as a result of sustaining some type of silly injury; one example which comes to mind was when he dropped a hammer on one of his toes. As he became older the number of hospital visits significantly reduced although he did require quite a lot of treatment in or around 2011 in connection with his carpal tunnel surgery.
7. My father was treated at the University Hospital of Wales ("*the hospital*") under the care of Professor Collins.
8. As far as I am aware my father was not given any warning or advice regarding the risk of infection from Factor IX concentrates.
9. My father was infected with Hepatitis C via contaminated Factor IX concentrates.
10. I am unaware as to when, how or by whom the news about my father's Hepatitis C diagnosis was conveyed to him.
11. My father told me about his Hepatitis C diagnosis when I was aged 16; this was prompted by the fact that I had discovered that my father was receiving some sort of payment and I enquired about the source of the same.
12. My father said to me "*I was given some treatment many years ago which meant that I ended up being infected with Hepatitis*". I remember being really shocked at the time and also, initially, a little apprehensive and frightened in relation to the risk of transmission of the virus because at the age of 16 I did not fully understand or appreciate the exact modes of transmission.

13. I distinctly recall my father making it clear to me that he felt there were people out there who were far worse off than him, such as those who had been infected at a very young age and who had their whole lives ahead of them. My father was fantastic at looking on the bright side of life; he always managed to find a silver lining wrapped up in even the most desperate news. I, however, always found it weird that my father appeared to remain resolutely positive and somehow managed to wholeheartedly take the virus in his stride.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. As far as I am aware, my father was not exposed to vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

15. I do not know whether my father was tested or used for the purposes of research without his knowledge or consent.

16. My father was treated with Factor IX concentrates without his informed consent.

Section 5. Impact

17. As I have mentioned above, my father dealt with his infection in the most positive and awe inspiring manner. I also think that my father hid a lot of his pain and suffering from the family because he did not want to burden or worry us. One would be hard pushed to meet a better man than my father.

18. Up until I was a teenager my father worked really hard in the building trade. I remember accompanying him on numerous building jobs when I was growing up. However, when I reached my teenage years he started to struggle to work as hard as he both used, and wanted, to. When I moved out of the family home, my father was always the first to offer to come and help me with maintenance jobs around the house. I remember him only managing to do a

few hours each day and saying "*that is all I can manage*". He would then have to go back to bed to rest; the extreme lethargy and exhaustion had started to set in. My father was always willing to help yet the Hepatitis C precluded him from doing so to the extent to which he wanted to.

19. My father was a tough cookie in relation to how he dealt with difficulties in his health and would always say "*I will be alright*", whilst everyone around him would be freaking out. He had a very poorly hand which took a long time to heal and necessitated numerous hospital visits, yet despite the obvious pain he was in, he never once complained. My father was sometimes made to wait for hours at the hospital, often in absolute agony, which I believe was due to clinicians' fear of the risk of cross infection from his Hepatitis C.

20. Towards the latter stages of my father's life, the virus really started to take its toll on him. In the last year of my father's life, he looked extremely yellow and the clinicians told us that his liver was struggling because he had developed cirrhosis.

21. Things then started to become even more difficult and frustrating for my father when he suffered with a thickening of one of his heart arteries which led to numerous fainting episodes. The clinicians advised that my father would require a pacemaker. Ordinarily, this procedure would be a relatively straightforward one but the fact that my father had Hepatitis C "*threw a spanner into the works*". The procedure was significantly delayed because the clinicians advised that my father's surgery would have to take place at the end of the day and that it was imperative for him to be the last patient taken into theatre on any particular day. There never seemed to be a "*right time*" for the procedure to take place. This delaying of the procedure meant that my poor father had to endure further and more frequent episodes of fainting whilst he was waiting for his pacemaker. After what seemed like an eternity, the procedure finally took place.

22. My father's health significantly deteriorated in the last couple of months before he passed away which sadly coincided with me going into hospital for a major

operation. Up to this point, I had helped my father with almost all aspects of his life including his medical care. I believe that my father hid a lot of his physical difficulties from me during this time because he did not want to add to the stress I was already under in relation to my operation. My father told me that I needed to focus on my own health at this time.

23. My father had to be re-admitted to the hospital for a further procedure to correct the fact that the pacemaker was not working in the position in which it had been originally sited. This correction procedure duly took place and the plan was for my father to remain in hospital for a few days due to his high risk of bleeding. However, during the next couple of days my father suffered complications and I believe that the decision was finally made to take him back to theatre where he suffered a cardiac arrest and was unable to be saved.

24. I remember receiving a telephone call from someone at the hospital asking that I attend immediately. I had just come out of hospital myself and was recovering from major surgery. I rushed to the hospital and spoke to one of the clinicians who had been in theatre with my father and he told me that they had needed to work on two parts of my father's heart but had initially decided that it would be done on two different occasions as my father initially seemed to have responded well but because of the time taken to secure a theatre space for him as it had to be the last space of the day they decided to do the other part at the same time. They thought that it would have been better to go ahead instead of having to try and secure a second theatre slot. My father had to be the last patient admitted to theatre on any particular day due to the clinicians' fear of cross contamination. Reading between the lines, I initially thought that I was being told that they had not really had sufficient time, or acted in a timely manner, to give them the best possible chance of saving my father.

25. A short while later, I attended my father's inquest where the clinicians told the coroner a different version of events. They just stated that they did all they could and there was no mention of anything that they had told me, as referred to in paragraph 24 above. Up until this point, I had not really been angry but

on hearing this, I was absolutely furious. I was outraged that the clinician had told me a much more detailed story as referred to in paragraph 24 above. I did not know which version of events accurately reflected what had happened on the day my father passed away. I remember speaking up at the inquest about this confusion, in a somewhat argumentative manner, and being told off by the coroner.

26. I do not believe that my father was ever offered any treatment for his Hepatitis C. I remember chatting to someone at a Haemophilia Society convention meeting, whose father had been offered treatment and had subsequently cleared the virus. I remember being really shocked as I had no idea that a treatment even existed.

27. In terms of disclosure, my father only told the immediate family and a very small selection of close and trustworthy friends. I think that one of the reasons that he told a couple of friends was that he needed help with the form filling in relation to obtaining financial assistance from the Skipton Fund (SF). My father's friends helped him with the requisite application. I believe that this was for the Stage 1 Payment. As far as I am aware, my father did not suffer any direct discrimination or bad behaviour resulting from his limited disclosures pertaining to his infection.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

28. I refer to paragraphs 19, 21, 24 and 25 above.

29. My father did receive a type of counselling prior to the pacemaker procedure but this had nothing to do with his Hepatitis C. I remember helping my father to complete the forms in relation to the same.

30. Neither my father nor I received any counselling or psychological support in consequence of his infections. I was also not offered any support following my father's passing in August 2013.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

31. My father received the Stage 1 Payment from the SF in or around 2005. As previously mentioned, two of his friends assisted him with the application. He used this money to help him move house and he was really grateful to receive the same. He was not working at this time and he was really chuffed to be able to purchase a gift for me as I was also moving house at the same time.
32. When my father passed away, my uncle applied for the Stage 2 Payment on behalf of my family and we were successful in obtaining this.
33. As far as I am aware, my father did not receive any other support or financial assistance from the SF.

Section 8. Other Issues

34. I also recently found out that I was actually taken as a child to have a test for Hepatitis C as my father had telephoned my mother to tell her that he was infected with the same. My mother and father had separated by this time but my mother remembers my father telephoning her and telling her that he thought that he was going to die. He told my mother to telephone the hospital and arrange for me to be tested but she does not remember much else.
35. I feel that a lot of people, including my father, have been treated very badly by the UK Government and the NHS. I feel that by speaking out about my father's story that I will help the cause. I have met people over the years who have lost young children as a result of this scandal and I would do anything I can to help these people.

Anonymity

36. I do not want to apply for anonymity and 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..... 07.08.2020