

Witness Name: J M Merry
Statement No: WITN2815010
Exhibits: WITN2815011-14
Dated: February 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

SECOND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JENNIFER MARGARET MERRY

I, Jennifer Margaret Merry, will say as follows:-

1. My name is Jennifer Margaret Merry and I was born on GRO-C 1947. I live at GRO-C Warwickshire, GRO-C I am retired and married to Philip Laurence Merry and we have two sons, Matthew James Merry (date of birth GRO-C 1974) and Simon Philip Merry (date of birth GRO-C 1977). My husband and my two sons have also provided witness statements for the Public Inquiry.
2. I was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated Factor VIII concentrates.
3. I also produced a "*First Written Statement*" under Witness Number: **WITN2815001** on 11th April 2019.
4. I now prepare this Second Written Statement which focuses on my health following a review of my medical records.
5. In 1982 I asked to be considered for Sterilisation. The full procedure, which involved a Dilation and Curettage (D&C), Laparoscopic Sterilisation and removal of a Polyp, was undertaken in April 1983.

6. Knowing that I had a low Factor VIII level I got in touch with Dr. M. Strevens at the Haemophilia Centre in Coventry, prior to the procedure. We spoke about my Factor VIII levels and he said these were low. I have found a blood test form in my medical records which was dated 3rd March 1983; attached at **Exhibit WITN2815011**. I believe that this test was taken in preparation for the procedure. I find it very odd that the form records "carrier status" under the section entitled "*Investigation required*" because Dr Strevens was fully aware of my status and I held a medical card in this regard.
7. I did not receive any treatment, in the form of blood products, for the procedure and I bled badly following my discharge from the Coventry and Warwick Hospital ("*the Hospital*"). I remember that I almost ruined a newly fitted carpet through blood loss and this volume of bleeding continued for almost a week leaving me unable to walk around, do any housework or shopping.
8. I did not get in touch with Dr Strevens as I felt that he had thought it not necessary for me to have any blood products and therefore that this bleeding was almost to be expected. However, I do believe that I attended my GP about the blood loss. I cannot find a clinic note of the same but this does not rule out the fact that my attendance may not have been recorded.
9. In light of what was to come for Haemophiliacs I feel extremely lucky that I did not have treatment at that time. I have always wondered whether it was known then that there was a problem with blood products or whether my lack of treatment for the procedure was caused by a breakdown in communication from the Hospital. The department I was dealing with at this hospital did not communicate very well and I felt that there was a distinct lack of communication.
10. There is also another problem I want to flag which still exists today which is that I am often told by the medical profession "*we don't treat carriers and women don't bleed*".

11. I now turn to events which occurred in 2005. **Exhibit WITN2815012** is a copy of a letter dated 9th March 2005 from Dr C Hortas, Staff Grade in Rheumatology to Dr A Chatterjee which confirms my clinic visit of 2nd March 2005 (the clinic date is actually obscured by a portion of a post-it note). I was seen on this date by Dr C Hortas. The contents of this letter are incorrect. Paragraph 3 is entitled "*Past medical history*" which states "*She tells me that she has chronic hepatitis C virus infection but I cannot find any serology today. This happened after a transfusion following cholecystectomy 26 years ago*". I made it quite clear to Dr Hortas that I had naturally cleared Hepatitis C and that it was caused by contaminated blood products.
12. The letter also confirms that I have Sjogren's syndrome and the last paragraph is interesting in that it states "*Hepatitis C may be a secondary cause of Sjogren's syndrome*".
13. **Exhibit WITN2815013** is a copy of a letter dated 28th April 2005 from Dr J Ravindran, Consultant Rheumatologist, to Dr Chatterjee which states "*I have checked her ENA to look for characteristic anti Ro and LA antibodies seen in Sjogren's. Anticipating that these will be negative.....*". Despite the fact that he was awaiting these results he told me at the clinic (15th April 2005) that I did not have this syndrome.
14. I have also suffered episodes of undiagnosed pain in my right side, radiating through into my back. Some of these episodes have been extremely painful and I still suffer with them today; having experienced three such episodes from August 2019. The pain is always in the same place but varies in its intensity and with it comes a feeling of being completely washed out. The exhaustion that accompanies it is debilitating. I have undergone a number of tests to ascertain the cause of these painful episodes which have to date proved fruitless. **Exhibit WITN2815014** is a copy letter dated 15th September 1984 from Dr Isabel Draper to Mr T A Waterworth which provides evidence of how long I have been experiencing right sided pain.

15. The above facts and exhibits provide evidence of some of the symptoms that I have had over the years since being infected with Hepatitis C .

16. Sadly the results of the tests which I have had carried out have proved inconclusive and left me no further forward in relation to ascertaining why I have these bouts of debilitating symptoms.

17. I would just like to add that we did get a Haematology Sister called Chris Titley at the Hospital. This was after the HIV scandal broke and I think it became quite clear then that patients would need another person to feel comfortable with and to speak to.

Anonymity

18. I do not wish to apply for anonymity and I would like 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.....

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