

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7552001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: November 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B
2. I was co-infected with the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion I had in 1989 as part of treatment I was receiving for acute myeloid leukaemia.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How Infected

4. I was transfused with a good number of units of blood/platelets as part of my Acute Myeloid Leukaemia treatment during my four-month transplant regimen between September and December 1989. The treatment took place at the John Darcie Transplant Unit at the Hammersmith Hospital. I was under the care of Professor John Goldman, Consultant Haematologist.
5. Shortly after the transfusion (a couple of months later), at a follow-up appointment, I was diagnosed with 'hepatitis' (HBV I believe), following which only one week (one dose of) therapy of Interferon was given. I can't now remember who told me about the diagnosis. It might have been the Registrar. I was told that there is (often or sometimes) a spike with the liver post-transplant as the liver doesn't always like or react well to the transplant regimen. There wasn't any in depth discussion about it and no admission to me that I had been infected by the blood transfused to me during the period of treatment. I was led to believe that it was all part and parcel of the treatment. As far as I was concerned (and led to believe) the matter had been resolved quite quickly with the Interferon dose. There was no follow up or update on hepatitis by my clinicians at Hammersmith Hospital although retrospectively I remember that I had routine blood tests for about 10 years. I then moved to Australia.
6. Well over two decades later, in February 2011, I had what I thought was a routine blood test at GRO-B (I had returned to the UK in 2002) and I was informed that I had been infected with HCV. I wasn't given much information to help me to understand or manage the infection at that point either. No treatment was offered to me. I think that further blood tests were mentioned but I don't remember there being any follow-up on it.

7. I wasn't offered any treatment or follow up until 2018. I had by then moved to GRO-B and my GP practice there referred me to the Liver Unit at the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth. The team at the Liver Unit were clear that the blood transfusion I was given in 1989 was the cause of the HCV. I went back to the Hammersmith Hospital and gained confirmation letter that I was transfused with blood supplied from Colindale transfusion centre and that I was infected with HCV for something very close to 30 years. The liver scan I had revealed damage to my liver, and I needed immediate triple therapy medication to try to clear the HCV infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I do not think that I was infected with anything other than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

9. I wasn't advised of any risk of infection through my blood transfusion. I wasn't informed that I was being tested for infection (HCV or otherwise) after the transfusion. When I moved to Australia in 1998 or 1999, I needed to establish that I didn't have HIV/AIDS as part of their entry criteria. I paid for my own test and that is the only way (and serendipity as I would call it) that I knew that I wasn't infected with HIV too.
10. I wasn't aware of the significance of the HCV infection, and I wasn't given any information to help me to understand or manage the virus until 2018. Nothing was explained to me until then. No HCV clearing treatment was offered to me until then. After the Acute Myeloid Leukaemia treatment in 1989, I had what I believed to be routine, follow-up blood tests for approximately 10 years but I do

not know whether or not that was to test my liver function. I think it unlikely that I was monitored at all.

Section 5. Impact

11. The triple therapy clearing treatment I had for what I remember to have been around 6 months was nasty and aggressive. It was a combination of Interferon, Ribavirin and something else (the dosage had to be lowered because of potential problems to my heart). It was a difficult time for me and my family. I was agitated and short tempered. You never know what damage the HCV infection is going to have you on in the long term and that weighs heavily.

12. My liver is damaged. I suffer with arthritis to multiple joints, and I have high uric acid levels which could be attributed to the damage caused to my liver

13. I can't help but feel disappointed in Hammersmith Hospital. They are after all a centre of excellence, and nothing was explained to me, nor was any robust monitoring put in place. The physicians there should have come clean about what had happened to me, followed up with me more aggressively to ensure that I was tested for any possible NBC infection, rather than leave it to me to follow up with my GP

14. I also feel the psychological impact of knowing that I could have passed this on to my partner during this period has had a detrimental effect on my relationship

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

15. I wasn't offered any counselling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

16. I haven't had any issues with the Trusts and funds.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

17. I wish to remain anonymous, and I understand that this redacted Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-B

Dated

12 JAN 2023