

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7569001

Exhibits:0

Dated: December 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 I live at GRO-B
GRO-B
2. GRO-B
3. I make this statement in relation to my mother GRO-B: M who was born
or GRO-B and is currently aged GRO-B. She was infected with Hepatitis C
Virus (HCV) via a contaminated blood transfusion during complications during
GRO-B at the GRO-B
GRO-B
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
mother's medical records. My GRO-B has applied for her GRO-B
GRO-B

5. My mother and my [GRO-B] also intend to provide witness statements to the Inquiry.

Section 2. How Affected

6. My mother was infected with HCV following a contaminated blood transfusion received due to complications [GRO-B]

[GRO-B]

7. [GRO-B]

8. I am unaware as to whether any information or advice was provided to my mother in relation to the risks of being exposed to infection from blood transfusions.

9. In or around [GRO-B] my mother was informed by her GP in [GRO-B] that she had contracted Hepatitis C. I don't know whether she was given adequate information to understand and manage the infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I don't know whether my mother received any other infections, apart from HCV, from the contaminated blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

11. I do not know whether my mother was treated or tested without her knowledge or consent. Similarly, I do not know whether my mother was used for the purposes of research without her consent. [GRO-B]

[GRO-B]

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

12. The HCV damaged my mother's liver which resulted in Cirrhosis for which she required extensive medical treatment.
13. She also developed and now has Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.
14. She has gall stone issues and wears a Percutaneous Cholecystostomy (PCT).
15. My mother suffers with Atrial Fibrillation (AF).
16. My mother suffered with extreme fatigue, nausea and irritability.
17. All my mother's treatment for HCV [GRO-B] and I am aware that she underwent Harvoni treatment about 7 years ago.
18. My mother suffers with constant anxiety, stress and worry because of her HCV infection which has required constant medical attention.
19. On top of her HCV, my mother also had to care for my disabled father, who had Emphysema. He needed 24/7 care from her. He passed away in [GRO-B]
20. Currently my mother requires a carer 24/7 and my brother [GRO-B] is fulfilling that role.
21. The effect of my mother's infection on me was really hard. I was the youngest kid, me and one of my brothers were twins, we knew she had this bad thing, and you have to remember that this was during AIDS and everything, so I had this feeling like every time I kissed my mother, I had to be careful not to kiss her on the lips or next to the lips as I might get sick myself. Did I have the same issue as my mother? This was one of the many questions that went through my head. It was a difficult thing to deal with as I was only a young child and could not really understand this virus.

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22. I remember my mother was very jaundiced most of the time, she looked sick because she had cirrhosis of the liver and even in the winter, she looked like she had a tan. I was really worried that I could become infected and then have the same path as my poor mother.
23. Growing up I remember my mother sleeping for a vast majority of the time; if she was not working or looking after us, she was sleeping. At the time, this was hard to understand but now I have the knowledge that extreme tiredness and lethargy are symptoms of HCV it is easier to understand.
24. My mother was a good woman who had to deal with a lot of other health ailments, some of which were likely caused by the HCV. She had thyroid issues and now she has cancer. She managed to carry on working until maybe about 7 years ago which was incredible given the health problems she had.
25. It was so fortunate that my mother managed to get the Harvoni treatment and thankfully the GRO-B refused. This treatment literally saved my mother's life and was the turning point for the whole family. She still has lasting damage in her liver but at least the HCV is now undetectable in her system.
26. I have never really discussed how I felt growing up with anyone, not even my mother or my siblings. We all knew that my mother was acutely unwell, but it was never discussed back then. There was a lot of stigma in the 1980s which surrounded AIDS and the state of knowledge back then was literally that you could catch AIDS by touching someone. I was worried that HCV was in the same sort of group of horrid viruses, and I remember that every time I hugged my mother as a child, I ensured that I turned my face away from her. For me, growing up with a mother with HCV, the resounding issues I had were worrying about hugging my mother and becoming infected myself.
27. Even today, I would never tell my friends about my mother's infection. I would never disclose to anyone that my mother has HCV, for fear of what people would think. If they knew the truth, they would certainly treat my mother differently. I definitely suppressed and hid HCV. It is really hard to say how the

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enforced secrecy issue has affected me because I chose and only know that route, so I don't have anything to compare it to.

28. I am not totally sure how clued up my mother is about HCV and what her state of knowledge is in relation to the actual ramifications of being infected. She knows that she has a bad liver, but I am not sure she appreciates the significance of what she has been infected with.

29. My brother GRO-B is looking after my mother, and he takes her to see a liver specialist and a dermatologist. My mother has been itching a lot for the last 4 months and I carried out my own research and found out that this could be caused by a bad liver.

30. My mother also suffered with gall stones and due to her damaged liver from the HCV, the consultants were unable to remove her gall bladder because it is situated next to the liver. The operation would be very risky due to this and also due to the fact that my mother suffers with AF. As a result of not being able to operate to remove the gall bladder, my mother had to wear a PCT from May to December 2021. A tube was inserted to remove the bile in my mother's gall bladder, and this really impacted her quality of life; it was so horrible for her. My brother GRO-B had to change the bag twice a day for our mother. Imagine having this thing wrapped around your leg it must have been truly awful. My mother could not sleep at night, and I felt so sorry for her at this time. Every 6 weeks they had to insert a new tube into the gall bladder which meant making a new hole which was so painful for my mother. They repeatedly tried to go in with a laser to zap the gallstones, but it kept failing. Luckily in December 2021 the laser procedure worked which meant that my mother no longer had to wear the PCT which had really started to get her down, even though she somehow managed to captivate us all with her smiles despite how she felt.

31. My mother is an amazing woman who has the strongest character. I really do admire her and how she had dealt with HCV. I don't think many people would have dealt with it like my mother has been able to.

32. The liver problem is like "*the elephant in the room*", it is meant to be dormant, but it is always there. When we grew up, we were led to believe that our mother would die from liver disease. That was, until the miracle of Harvoni arrived.

33. I travel a lot for work, but I make sure that I visit my mother at least every 2 weeks. I telephone her every day though. I found out that my siblings took her to see [GRO-B] recently and that she had the most wonderful time. The focus is now on ensuring that our mother enjoys the rest of her life, and we will do whatever it takes to make that happen.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

34. We did not know that there was any treatment for HCV until a few years ago.

My mother was treated with Harvoni about 7 years ago.

[GRO-B]

[GRO-B]

35. Neither my mother nor I have ever been offered any counseling or psychological support in consequence of her HCV infection.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

36. Neither my mother nor I have received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts or Funds set up to distribute payments.

37. [GRO-B] and did not know that financial assistance was available. The obstacles we faced in this regard were lack of knowledge and correspondence from the NHS/Trusts/Funds regarding my mother's infection and the fact that financial assistance was available.

Section 8. Other Issues

38. I would like the Inquiry to find out the truth. I don't know how many people are infected. I don't know how it happened and I want answers. I want my mother

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to be compensated that would be even better not that that will change her liver status.

Anonymity

39. I wish to be anonymous.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated.....DECEMBER 20, 2022.....