

Witness Name: Professor Christine Lee

Statement No.: WITN0644124

Exhibits: WITN0644125-WITN0644127

Dated: 16 February 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PROFESSOR CHRISTINE LEE

I, Professor Christine Lee, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. I provide this supplementary statement further to my general Rule 9 statement dated 24 September 2020 and in order to correct oral evidence that I gave to the Inquiry on 21 October 2020.
2. I gave oral evidence to the Inquiry over two days, on 20 and 21 October 2020. Transcripts of my evidence are available on the Inquiry's website.
3. On 21 October 2020, I was asked a question by Counsel to the Inquiry in relation to testing of sexual partners of our patients who had contracted HCV and HIV. The following question was put to me:

"How was it that the Centre had stored sera for the sexual partners of a number of its patients" [page 80 of transcript, line 14-15]

I was asked a number of further questions about whether partners of patients had been tested for HIV and HCV infection without their consent. I would like to clarify

and expand upon my oral response as I have had time to reflect on matters and also to consult the relevant literature.

4. At the Royal Free Hospital, there was a group of partners of haemophilic patients (with HIV and HCV infection) who were tested for the HIV infection. The testing for HIV had originally been performed with consent as required at that time. The sera samples of these partners of patients were stored (in line with our usual practice at the time) and later tested for HCV infection, without their consent. Consent for HCV testing was not a requirement and was performed on stored specimens in order to be able to advise patients and their partners of the risk of transmission of HCV, as soon as possible, after a test for HCV antibody first became available in 1991.
5. The testing of these stored specimens of partners was reported in the paper: Lee et al – “Hepatitis C antibody profile in adults with haemophilia and their sexual partners”, *Br J Haematol* 1992; 81: 133-4. **[WITN0644125]**. This paper outlined that we tested sera from 31 partners of anti-HIV haemophiliacs and found only one infected with HCV. This person was an IV drug user whose husband was a haemophiliac and also a drug user. Both husband and wife had HIV and HCV and were deceased at the time that the wife’s samples were tested for HCV. Hence this paper demonstrated that sexual transmission of HCV infection was probably uncommon and this significant information could be provided to all patients and their partners.
6. Sexual transmission of HCV was further reviewed in a paper by Paul Telfer who was researching towards an Oxford DM on HCV under my supervision: Telfer, P.T. – “Sexual transmission of Hepatitis C virus”, *Haemophilia* 1995; 1 (Suppl 4): 15-18. **[WITN0644126]**. This reaffirmed that transmission of HCV from haemophilic patients to their partners was uncommon.
7. The paper by Dr Telfer quotes the Royal Free experience in the abstract: Telfer et al – “Prevalence of HIV and HCV infection in sexual partners of haemophilic patients”, *Br J Haematol* 1993; 84: Abstr.58. **[WITN0644127]**. In 1995 Dr Telfer obtained consent for taking a blood sample and testing of an additional 27 partners of HCV infected

patients to extend the number of partners tested to 58 (which included the 31 who had already been tested). Once again, only one partner was found to be positive for HCV infection; this was the same partner who was a drug user. Despite the lack of evidence of sexual transmission of HCV infection, it remained our policy to advise our HCV positive patients to use condoms.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed

GRO-C

Dated 16th February 2021

Table of exhibits:

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
1992	Lee et al – "Hepatitis C antibody profile in adults with haemophilia and their sexual partners", <i>Br J Haematol</i> 1992; 81: 133-4.	WITN0644125
1995	Telfer, P.T. – "Sexual transmission of Hepatitis C virus", <i>Haemophilia</i> 1995; 1 (Suppl 4): 15-18.	WITN0644126
1993	Telfer et al – "Prevalence of HIV and HCV infection in sexual partners of haemophilic patients", <i>Br J Haematol</i> 1993; 84: Abstr.58.	WITN0644127