

Witness Name: Dr Sarah Spencer

Statement No.: WITN3563001

Exhibits: None

Dated: 29 August 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DR SARAH SPENCER

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 3 July 2019.

I, Sarah Spencer, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Dr Sarah Spencer. My address is Princess of Wales Hospital, Coity Road, Bridgend, CF31 1RQ. My date of birth is GRO-C 1966. My professional qualifications are MB BS, FRCS, FRCM.
2. My role is that of Interim Unit Medical Director at Princess of Wales Hospital within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. In conjunction with the hospital's senior leadership team I contribute to providing leadership, establishing clinical standards and governance processes to support delivery of safe, high quality, clinical care.

Section 2: Response to Criticism of Elaine Huxley

3. *"3. At paragraphs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6 and 8.1 of Ms Huxley's statement, she claims that in 1976 she was admitted to undergo a total abdominal hysterectomy. There was a complication following the operation and she began to bleed heavily. Ms Huxley was not seen for at least an hour, necessitating a blood transfusion of at least 8 units of blood. Ms Huxley claims one of the units of blood was contaminated with Hepatitis C. Ms Huxley further claims the hospital did not follow correct post-operative procedure*

as nobody carried out hourly observations or monitored her blood pressure. Please comment on this."

4. Unfortunately it is impossible to comment with confidence without reference to the clinical records from that episode of care, as the events concerned took place over 40 years ago. In addition, to make any assessment of the standard of care, one would need to establish what the prevailing standards and expectations were at that time, particularly in relation to blood transfusion indications and process, and be able to consider the records of care in light of this.
5. It is normal practice for medical records to be destroyed at some time after a minimum retention period (in this case, for at least 8 years after the operation) has elapsed. That retention period is determined by Welsh Government (and the Health Departments of the devolved nations).
6. I can confirm that the earliest clinical records we currently hold for Ms Huxley are from 1982. I believe that earlier records have been destroyed.
7. *"4. At paragraphs 4.2, 8.1 and 8.2 of Ms Huxley's statement, she claims that all the records of her time at Bridgend General Hospital in 1976 have been removed, destroyed or gone missing. She claims this cannot be a coincidence given that this was the point at which she was given contaminated blood, while the rest of her medical records remain intact. Please comment on this."*
8. Please see above for detail of record retention. There are no medical records on file for her prior to 1982. That her records from 1976 have been destroyed is in keeping with the retention policy and not at all selective.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Signed: Sarah Spencer

Dated: 29 August 2019