

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

S.21 INQUIRIES ACT 2005 RESPONSE

I, Mr Len Richards will say as follows: -

1. I provide this statement in response to the following request under Section 21 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 22 December 2020:
"The Inquiry seeks the provision of information by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board ("the Board") relating to the circumstances in which a 2 month old patient was treated, as set out in an email of the Board to the Inquiry dated 21 October 2020."

The interpretation of the evidence and witness testimony relating to the circumstances in which a young child was treated at the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre

2. The statement relates to the treatment of Colin Smith Junior (the patient) whose date of birth is GRO-C/1982. Cardiff and Vale University Health Board stress that the oral and written testimony of the family of the patient is not disputed. It is the interpretation of that information that has been drawn by the Inquiry that the Health Board wishes to clarify.

The patient was not seen by Professor Bloom on 21 July 1983

3. The treatment record for that date and the following day has not been accurately interpreted by the Inquiry. A page from the patient's medical notes was submitted to the Infected Blood Inquiry (WITN 3705028). This page related to a clinical episode on the 21 July 1983. In the summary of evidence about the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre, presented by Miss Richards on 8 Oct 2020, this clinical note is misinterpreted as having been written by Professor Bloom. Ms Richards states:
"Just to remind you, because the dates are very telling indeed, Colin was born in 1982. He was seen by Professor Bloom on 21 July 1983 and the notes record he was a known haemophiliac." (Lines 9-13, Page 9)
4. The clinical note written on the 21 July 1983 was not written by Professor Bloom and he did not see the patient on that day. The clinical note was written by Dr Stephen May who was a junior doctor and lecturer in haematology working in Cardiff at the time. This misunderstanding appears to have arisen because only the first page of the entry in the medical notes was available to the Inquiry. The second page of the clinical note is supplied to the Inquiry as Appendix LR1. This page shows that Dr Stephen May has signed the entry. The clinical note does not record an out-patient consultation by Professor Bloom. Instead it records an out of routine hours attendance and clinical review by Dr May. Dr May correctly identifies that the patient has not been previously treated recording "Known haemophiliac - not treated", an entry that Dr May underlined. Subsequently in the clinical note Dr May records that the patient had not received factor VIII concentrate or cryoprecipitate.
5. On the first page of the clinical note, which is already available to the Inquiry, it is stated that "This evening standing up and fell backwards hit back of head on skirting board". This confirms that the consultation took place outside of routine working hours sometime during the evening of 21 Jul 1983.

6. The second page of the clinical note, now supplied to the Inquiry, records the rest of the consultation. It states: "D/W Prof Bloom". This entry relates to Dr May telephoning Professor Bloom at home to ask for advice. This would be standard practice for a junior doctor seeing a child outside of routine hours, especially if the child had not been previously treated with any blood product. The advice provided by Professor Bloom, as recorded by Dr May, states that "for factor VIII or cyro if v'puncture easy". This shows that Professor Bloom gave Dr May a choice of treatments depending on how difficult it was to gain venous access. Dr May records that "Rx 250 u Lister VIII rather difficult venepuncture (but not as bad as in OPD 3/52 ago)".
7. This is the first treatment with a blood product that the patient was given and occurred on 21st July 1983. The treatment record for the 21 July 1983 is supplied to the Inquiry as Appendix LR2. This treatment records confirms the date as 21 July 1983 and that 255 units of NHS factor VIII concentrate were infused. Dr May admitted the patient overnight for neuro observations so that signs of an intracranial haemorrhage could be detected early if they had developed. The patient was well the following day (22 July 1983) and allowed home. No factor VIII treatment was given on 22 July 1983.
8. Professor Bloom first reviewed the patient on 7th July 1983 and the clinical record of that consultation is supplied to the Inquiry as Appendix LR3. In this clinical note Professor Bloom does not refer to the fact that the patient had not been previously treated with blood products, although it is almost certain that he knew that this was the case.

The patient received commercial factor VIII concentrate at the Royal Gwent Hospital, Newport and not at the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre at the University Hospital of Wales.

9. On 8 October 2020, whilst reviewing evidence about the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre, Miss Richards stated to the Inquiry:
"Colin was treated by Professor Bloom with factor concentrates, initially NHS and then commercial". (Lines 7 – 10, Page 17)
10. This statement is not completely accurate. Professor Bloom did not treat the patient with commercial factor VIII concentrates in 1983 or 1984. The commercial factor VIII concentrates that the patient received were prescribed by a haematologist at the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport. The treatment records at the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre for 1983 and 1984 record that Professor Bloom treated the patient with NHS factor VIII concentrates and cryoprecipitate, according to his policy for treating children with haemophilia A at that time. The Cardiff Haemophilia Centre treatment records demonstrate that Professor Bloom treated the patient with heat treated commercial factor VIII concentrate in 1985.

11. The misunderstanding about which hospital treated the patient with commercial factor VIII concentrates relates to the interpretation of a treatment record that has been supplied to the Inquiry (WITN [3705032]). This document records the following treatment:

Date	Concentrate	Dose (iu)	Batch No
22 August 1983	Kryobulin	253	09MD1882
19 September 1983	Kryobulin	243	09MD5682
12 June 1984	Elstree VIII concentrate	240 x 2	8CRV2217
12 June 1984	Armour	250 x 2	X43807
13/14 June 1984	Elstree	960	8CRU2217
15 June 1984	Elstree	470 (230/240)	HLA3161/8CRV2217
16 June 1984	Elstree	240/230	8CRV2217/HLA3161
17 June 1984	Elstree	230/240	HLA3161/8CRV2217

12. It is important to recognise that this treatment record is the second page of a two page document. The first page is supplied to the Inquiry as Appendix LR4. The first page is labelled "Royal Gwent" which is a reference to the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport. In addition the "Centre number" is recorded as 152 which is the National Haemophilia Database number of the Newport Haemophilia Centre (the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre is number 150). The fact the two pages are part of the same document is supported by the observation that the same incorrect date of birth is given on both pages, the hand writing appears to be of the same person and they are filed consecutively in the patient's Cardiff clinical notes.
13. The patient was treated for bleeding episodes at the Royal Gwent Hospital on the 22 August 1983 and 19 September 1983 with the commercial factor VIII concentrate named Kryobulin. It is important to note that two different batches of Kryobulin were administered.
14. On 12 June 1984 the patient underwent an operation for grommet insertion and adenoidectomy at the Royal Gwent Hospital, Newport. A letter from the Royal Gwent Hospital dated 21 June 1984 confirming this date is submitted as Appendix LR5. On the day of the operation the treatment record submitted to the Inquiry (WITN [3705032]) shows that the patient was initially treated with NHS factor VIII (Elstree) but later that day he was treated with a commercial factor VIII concentrate manufactured by Armour. Following this, treatment reverted back to NHS factor VIII concentrate for the subsequent five days. In the letter dated 21 June 1984 Dr Hewlett, the consultant haematologist at the Royal Gwent Hospital, wrote to Professor Bloom to inform him that the patient had undergone myringotomy and adenoidectomy at the Royal Gwent Hospital on 12 June 1984. Dr Hewlett states that the patient was given factor VIII during surgery and then daily for five days. This matches the treatment record supplied to the Inquiry (WITN [3705032]) which describes factor VIII concentrate being given over a six day period from 12 June to 17 June 1984.
15. It is noted that Professor Bloom had attempted to have this surgical procedure transferred to Cardiff. This is documented in a letter date 21 May 1984 written by Dr Fitzsimons of the University Hospital of Wales to Dr Hewlett at the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport and is submitted as Appendix LR6. The letter requested the details of the ENT surgeon at the Royal Gwent Hospital and stated that "Professor Bloom has asked me to make arrangements to have young chaps' grommets inserted here in Cardiff".

16. There is a series of correspondence which suggest that concerns about a delay in the date of the operation led to the operation being undertaken at the Royal Gwent Hospital. It is the contention of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board that, if the operation had taken place in Cardiff, it is almost certain that commercial factor VIII would not have been used because Professor Bloom had a strict policy of using NHS factor VIII concentrate or cryoprecipitate for young children at this time.
17. Cardiff and Vale University Health Board note that the hospital that treated the patient with each brand of factor VIII concentrate could be verified from an independent source. All factor VIII treatment given to the patient would have been reported to the UK National Haemophilia Database and so that database could be used to establish which hospital gave each brand of factor VIII concentrate and the year that each treatment was given.
18. In summary, Professor Bloom and the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre treated the patient with NHS factor VIII concentrate, cryoprecipitate and heated treated commercial factor VIII concentrate. Professor Bloom did not treat the patient with non-heat treated commercial factor VIII concentrate. The Newport Haemophilia Centre treated the patient with two brands of commercial factor VIII concentrate (Kryobulin and Armour) and NHS factor VIII concentrate.
19. Cardiff and Vale University Health Board acknowledges that this correction does not give any closure to the patient's family, if anything it may exacerbate their grief and add more hurdles to their pursuit of justice. Their child still suffered and died due to the treatment that was supposed to help him and no amount of clarification or fact checking will erase those memories or alleviate their sorrow. Cardiff and Vale University Health Board only seek to ensure that the correct information is disclosed to enable accurate inferences and conclusions are drawn by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 29/1/2021