Witness Name: Andrew Farkas
Statement No.: WITN5644001
Exhibits: None
Dated: 26 March 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR ANDREW FARKAS

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 4 February 2021.

I, Andrew Farkas, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. Thank you for asking for my comments on witness W1925 care in 1984 at the Jessop Hospital for Women, Sheffield.

2. My name is Andrew Farkas FRCS FRCOG and I work as a Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist at The Jessop Wing Hospital, Tree Root Walk, Sheffield, S10 2SF. I started in obstetric practice in 1988 and was appointed a consultant at the Jessop Hospital for Women in 1996, then Central Sheffield University Hospitals, now known as Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

3. You have provided me with the statement of witness W1925 dated 13 February 2019. Unfortunately, the maternity records from 1984 are unavailable. My comments are therefore based entirely on the account given in witness W1925's statement.

Section 2: Response to Criticism of witness W1925

At paragraph 14 of her statement, witness W1925 states that she believes that she was treated and tested at Jessop Hospital for Women without her knowledge or consent, without being given adequate information and for the purpose of research. She states that she believes that the authorities knew that the blood transfusion she received during childbirth in 1984 was contaminated with Hepatitis C ('HCV'), and that they intentionally infected her for the purpose of research.

4. The history witness W1925 gives is of a significant postpartum haemorrhage associated with pain. She was anaesthetised and required two intravenous infusions. On waking up, one was connected to blood and the other contained clear fluid. Postnatally, she was ill and remained in hospital for seven days. Subsequently, she has been diagnosed as being infected with Hepatitis C.

5. The cause of witness W1925's haemorrhage is unclear. The fact that it was associated with pain suggests the possibility of placental abruption, i.e. separation of the placenta, which would have occurred prior to delivery, but then may cause significant postpartum haemorrhage (PPH).

6. The fact that she required transfer to theatre indicates that the extent of bleeding was great. Blood products are given with caution and this pertained even in the 1980s. It is likely that she was haemodynamically compromised with a rise in pulse rate and fall in blood pressure. Blood would not be given as a routine and the fact that it was given suggests a significant degree of haemorrhage. Further evidence for this is the presence of two intravenous infusions. In the circumstances of life threatening haemorrhage, it would not have been possible to obtain consent for a blood transfusion from the patient. It would not have been standard practice to obtain consent from a relative, i.e. her mother in this case.

7. I am sorry to learn that witness W1925 contracted Hepatitis C.

8. In respect of paragraph 14 of her statement, it is inconceivable that anyone would test how she 'could cope with contaminated blood in my body and to see whether my child might become infected through breastfeeding and being in contact with me'. It was not known which blood products were contaminated. Had this been known, the blood would not have been issued or given.

At paragraph 14 of her statement, witness W1925 notes that there are gaps in her medical records from between August 1983 and September 1985, and that she has been told by Jessop Hospital for Women that the medical records were lost in a flood.

9. It would appear that witness W1925's records were initially damaged in a flood but, as I understand, they were recovered and archived. I also understand it is a legal obligation only to maintain a copy of old maternity medical records for 26 years and as a consequence the witness's records are no longer available.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 26.03.2021