

Witness Name: Patricia Fryer
Statement No: WITN7170001
Exhibits: WITN7170002
Dated:

Infected
Blood
Inquiry

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PATRICIA FRYER

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 7 April 2022.

I, Patricia Fryer will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Patricia Fryer and my date of birth is GRO-C 1936. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am married and have children and grand-children.
2. I wish to speak about my late father Charles Roberts and his infection with Hepatitis B (HBV) as a result of a series of blood transfusions. My father was always known as Charlie.
3. I confirm that I am not currently legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry Team to assist me with my statement.
4. I also confirm that I have had the option to seek anonymity and the Inquiry's statement of approach explained to me. I can confirm that I am not seeking anonymity.
5. This statement has been prepared with assistance from my husband Donald. I am 86 years of age and my memory is not as good as it used to be but we have tried to be as accurate as possible.

Section 2: How Infected

6. My father was born on GRO-C 1914. He always a healthy man, he served in the Army during the Second World War. Then he was a sheet metal worker for all his working life, he retired in 1978, when he was 65 years old.
7. Charlie was a good man, he was a calm and quietly spoken. He was liked by everyone. He loved sport, particularly cricket and football, he was a keen Hull City fan and would regularly go to Boothferry Park (Hull City's ground). He would walk both there and back, a total distance of about 8 miles for each game. When he got older my mother persuaded him to get a lift back home from the ground, he did this but always asked "what all the fuss was about".
8. When he was about 68 years old, his health started to deteriorate. He became forgetful and he was often getting lost, in places he knew, he had dizzy spells and unsteady on his feet. He went to Sutton Annex Hospital (which no longer exists) in Hull. This would have been around 1982.
9. The hospital decided that his blood was too thick and started my father on regular blood transfusions to help his condition. He had these transfusions every 3 or 4 months for a number of years. The regular transfusions at Sutton Annex seemed keep his condition stable and his health improved at first.

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10. As far as I am aware he was never given any sort of warnings about the potential risks of these numerous transfusions.
11. As Charlie got older I used to attend the hospital with him. The doctors and nurses never gave us any further information about his condition or how the treatments (transfusions) were going.
12. Gradually he became more ill. I had to nurse him at home, the only help I had was from my eldest daughter-in-law, who is a nurse. We cleaned him when he messed himself. The worrying thing was that we were never told about his infection with HBV, it could have been passed on to us. We should have been told.
13. Towards the end of his life, Charlie went into Castle Hill Hospital in Cottingham, this was for 4 to 6 weeks before he died, so about January 1997. As we visited him he gradually became more and more yellow with jaundice.
14. My father was on a ward next to the hepatitis ward but no connection with hepatitis was even mentioned to us. In the bed next to him was an HIV/ AIDS patient, my son knew him.
15. Shortly before he died, my father fell out of bed and broke his leg. No one from the hospital called us to tell us. We only knew when someone in the bed next to his, rang and told us. We arrived at the hospital to find his leg had been bandaged (not plastered), the staff didn't know how he had fallen out of his bed.
16. Still nothing was discussed with the family about his condition even though it was obvious, that he was very ill. I do not recall the names of any medical staff who dealt with my father until his death on **GRO-C** 1997.
17. In those days medical staff, especially doctors, just told patients and their families, what they decided we needed to know, which was so wrong.
18. I have sent the Inquiry some papers, which includes some correspondence between myself and 2 MPs, Diana Johnson and also Emma Hardy **GRO-C**. Also is my father's Death Certificate, this lists the causes of death as:
- 1(a) Bronchopneumonia
 - (b) Polycythemia Rubra Vera
 - 2 Hepatitis B (tuc) c jaundice
 - Renal Impairment
- These papers including the death certificate are produced as exhibit **WITN7160002**
19. At no stage did either Sutton Annex or Castle Hill Hospital's inform our family that my father had been infected with Hepatitis B, or had developed blood cancer (Polycythemia Rubra Vera) before his death.
20. After we saw these details on the death certificate, we asked for a meeting with the consultant Castle Hill Hospital, this happened shortly after Charlie's death, I do not recall the name of the doctor we saw, I think he was the consultant.
21. When we asked him about the conditions listed on his death certificate, and how he could have become infected with hepatitis b and developed cancer of the blood, he simply shrugged his shoulders. He gave us no answers to our questions

Section 3: Other Infections

22. We were never informed that Charlie contracted any other infections, than HBV.

Section 4: Consent

23. As far as I am aware, my father was not tested without his consent.

Section 5: Impact

24. The impact of my father's illness was significant on our family. My mother was older than Charlie and therefore was not able to care for him very well. My husband worked abroad for most of his working life and would therefore usually be away for 3 months out of 4.
25. This left all his care to me, my eldest daughter-in-law helped when she could because she worked long hours as a nurse. I effectively had to take over as the 'patriarch' of our family.
26. Any bereavements are very difficult for any family. My mother took Charlie's death very badly and she couldn't cope. With our assistance she lived to the age of 104. She never contracted HBV.
27. We never suffered any stigma as a result of his infection, because we didn't know.
28. Charlie had no tattoos or piecing's therefore he had no other risks factors before being given the numerous transfusions.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

29. We thought that Charlie was getting the treatment he required, but nothing was ever discussed; initially with him (he would have told me or my mother, we were a very close family). Then when I took over his health issues and attended all of his appointments with him, we were still told nothing to enable us to understand what was happening to him and how he had become infected with HBV and developed blood cancer, which they must have been aware of long before his death.
30. When he died, I looked after my mother for another 14 years, my family were offered no support or counselling.

Section 7: Financial Support

31. We never applied for any financial support.
32. I understand that the support schemes set up for contaminated blood, do not cover HBV, which seems very wrong to me.

Section 8: Other Issues

33. I do not understand why this contaminated blood scandal has been swept under the carpet, for so many years. Charlie died in 1997, therefore that it has been 25 years since then, let alone when he first received the contaminated blood.
34. My only concern is how can people be discriminated against. Some receiving compensation and not everyone. The blood scandal cost lives not just HCV, HBV was also received in contaminated blood. Families who lost loved ones, should be compensated even if the partner has died. It should be passed on to the next of kin.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

P. To.

Dated 8th Sept 2022 .