

# The Infected Blood Public Inquiry NEWSLETTER



THE  
HAEMOPHILIA  
SOCIETY

## *A summary of inquiry hearings from London*

This week the inquiry has heard from Professor Christine Lee and Professor Edward Tuddenham, both former directors of the Royal Free's haemophilia centre.

Prof Lee joined the hospital in 1983 to complete a research project on liver disease in haemophilia. She returned as a consultant in 1987 and became director in 1991. She said her first role was "80%" analysing data and although she saw patients she said she did not have "clinical responsibility" for decision making over treatment.

Professor Lee told the inquiry that evidence she gave to the Lindsay Tribunal in Ireland 20 years

ago should be taken as an accurate memory from that time and that it was now difficult for her to give "reliable information" from that period.

There was an interruption from the audience during her evidence in response to her claim that patients between 1978-1983 would have been told of their non A non B hepatitis infection.

Prof Lee said she was "frustrated" by calls for compensation, which she thought was the wrong thing to do. She said: "It suggests liability and I truly believe that people at that time were doing what they thought was the best."

Prof Tuddenham, who gave evidence for one day, was co-director from 1978—1986 and director between 2006-2011.

He said that in the "headlong rush" to make factor VIII in the late 70s, early 80s, "commercial incentive overwhelmed safety issues". He was also critical of the "lavish hospitality" on offer at haemophilia conferences from pharmaceutical companies.

Prof Tuddenham said "vigilance" was needed to avoid future viral infections in blood. He said: "We don't know it all and never will know it all, but we have to keep learning."

## *Inquiry news*

The role of the UK's Haemophilia Centre Directors' Organisation (UKHCDO) came under the spotlight during Prof Tuddenham's evidence. Prof Tuddenham, who attended most of the major meetings between 1978—1986, said the organisation was a "talking shop" which lacked the power to "issue orders and diktats". When the UKHCDO updated its treatment guidelines in mid-1983 as AIDS emerged, Prof Tuddenham said they would have been viewed by colleagues as "a polite suggestion". Treatment guidelines issued by UKHCDO in Dec 84, more than two and a half years after AIDS was first reported in the US, seemed to Prof Tuddenham "very gradual and cautious, viewed from here". He said treatment was a balance of the risks of bleeding versus the risks of the treatment itself.

\*Next week's hearings run from 27-29 October and feature evidence about Birmingham and Bradford's haemophilia centres.

## Quotes of the week

"I don't want people to think I'm a hard, unsympathetic person, because I'm not. These people were part of my life... It was the saddest tragedy of all, but I think to suggest culpability is wrong."

Prof Lee

"I don't disagree with patients being given information...but it's very difficult giving information when the information itself is being debated. "

Prof Lee on telling patients the risks of non A non B hepatitis.

"You have to treat the immediate emergency of the bleed, but is the product you've got a safe, effective means of doing that?... At the time, we were doing the best we could."

Prof Tuddenham

"It was a radical proposal, but it didn't make its way on to my desk. With hindsight ...I'm sure it would have had some impact."

Prof Tuddenham on a call to withdraw US blood products from the UK in May 1983

"You've given me the impression that you come with no particular agenda to pursue, other than helping the inquiry to the best of your ability." Sir Brian Langstaff to Prof Tuddenham