



Witness Statement Reference No

**WITNESS STATEMENT TO THE PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE OUTBREAK OF
CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE IN NORTHERN TRUST HOSPITALS**

Witness name: Ms Giulia Clarke (nee Rossi)

Statement of evidence

I, Ms Giulia Clarke, say as follows:

1. My name is Giulia Clarke and I live at an address which is known to the Inquiry Team. I am the daughter of Mr Ralph Rossi who died on 1st January 2008 at Antrim Area Hospital. By occupation I am a full time carer.
2. Father's pre-existing medical history

My father had been a fit man and was up until about one year before his death refereeing football matches, working in the garden and playing with his grandchildren.

Prior to his admission to Antrim Area Hospital on 13th December 2007 he already had been receiving chemotherapy treatment there but otherwise so far as I could see he appeared fine.

3. Admission to Antrim Area Hospital

He was admitted to Antrim Area Hospital on 13th December 2007 and was put into an eight bedded ward in Laurel House called A1. As far as I can remember the care in A1 was alright.

4. Transfer to B2

I visited my father in B2 and would describe the place as filthy. It was a disgrace and the smell was atrocious. It was a very strong smell of diarrhoea. My father's bed was also next to the toilets which made this worse. I believe that there were eight beds on the ward and that it was mixed with both men and women in the ward.

They also wheeled out two dead patients on trolleys while my father was in B2. It was really terrible.

I visited in the afternoon after the children came home from school. When my father was in ward B2 I visited perhaps two or three times. My mother was constantly there. She stayed with my father all the time.

5. Cleanliness

Ward A1 seemed to be quite clean but Ward B2 was atrocious. B2 was the sort of place that you did not want to stay in, you wanted to get out as quickly as possible. I would describe B2 as "a dirty hole."

6. Communication

Communication seemed to be quite good in A1. They did their job quite well. However it was a big mistake to move my father from A1 to B2. There was no communication in B2. We were not even told that he had contracted C difficile while he was there.

7. End of life care

It was terrible. My father actually said to my husband "could you shoot me?." That is how bad he felt. An animal would have been treated better. My father was dehydrated and should have been given some pain relief. I did not even realise that he was dying up until the day before his death. He was howling

and making noises. I had to ask for him to be given something for the pain. This was done but I do feel that the staff could and should have been more attentive to his needs. We were not even told that he was dying. I spoke to one of the nurses to see if he could be allowed home but she said that he could not possibly go home but apparently she had said to my mother that he might be allowed to go home just to keep her more contented. If they had told us that he was dying we could have arranged for the whole family to be there.

8. C difficile

I know that he contracted C diff in B2 because a test was done in A1 and this was clear but after he returned from B2 to A1 again a further test was done which was positive.

Even the nursing staff felt that he should never have been moved from A1 to B2. Apparently if he had needed the heart monitor then it could easily have been brought down from B2 to A1. I do not think anyone should be allowed to die in the way that my father died.

9. Cleanliness

There was no comparison between A1 and B2. A1 was clean whereas B2 was filthy. It was disgusting. I also went into various toilets in Antrim Area Hospital and none of them were clean.

10. Conclusion

If I had known about the infection I would have gone round taking photographs.

I cannot understand why the hospital kept moving my father around if there was C diff in the hospital. Surely they should also have given us the option of taking him home and taking our chances with him at home.

We did not think when he went into hospital that he was going to die. My father was not treated right by the hospital.

He was unnecessarily moved to the ward where he caught the infection and this caused him enormous and unnecessary suffering.

I declare that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed: .



Dated: 2/9/10.