

PE1517/KKK

Fiona Paterson submission of 20 September 2017

I had mesh inserted for a cytocele and rectocele prolapse repair in 2005. I am now having to have an operation to have it removed as it has eroded and made a hole in my vagina and has been the cause of recurring Bacterial Vaginosis for a number of years. The cause of the recurring infections was not known until I had a recent internal examination at the maternity hospital at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow. I am now scheduled to have it removed in November. This will mean that I will be off work for at least 2 months and will not know what damage the removal may cause. I am already experiencing stress incontinence, have to wear pads every day and avoid certain situations so that I am not caught in an embarrassing situation.

The original prolapse operation has left me with some numbness in my genital area and I have suffered from chronic back pain and more recently Plantar fasciitis for which I have had to attend the Podiatrist and has limited my mobility greatly. I will also at some point over the next year or so require further surgery to fix the urinary incontinence caused by the erosion of the mesh.

Please ban the use of mesh for both men and women permanently and don't let it be used again. I would never have agreed to have it in the first place if I knew what lay ahead of me. The prolapse operation was bad enough, recovery was long and slow and very painful. The removal of the mesh is a much more difficult operation and more invasive.

Please listen to what we are saying, we do not share our stories lightly but if it gets the mesh banned then I am willing to speak to anyone about the issues I am having. I don't know what lies ahead for me and the horror stories of how some women can now barely live a normal life scares me. The mesh has also robbed many women of a healthy sex life and in some cases their relationships as well.

The harm that a few inches of polypropylene has done was never envisaged, it was just a quick fix. Hopefully in future, such devices will be tested better and allergy testing will also be carried out. I don't know the full extent of the harm that this has done me as the medical profession are reluctant and ignorant of the effects that this has had on people. The medical profession has to be better educated on such devices and start listening to us and to investigate better why we are suffering the way we are. Too often our symptoms are attributed to age, weight, lifestyle, etc. Maybe now we will get heard and not sound like hypochondriacs.

The list of ailments caused by the mesh is not finite and I may never know if it is the mesh that is the cause of many of my problems. I can only hope that once I get it removed that I may manage to get my life back to some extent. Hopefully our petition to parliament will help other men and women in the future.

We also need easier access to our medical records to show what has been done to us.