

Petitioner submission of 5 September 2022

PE1865/JJJJ: Suspend all surgical mesh and fixation devices

By pursuing this petition, we have sought the following:

- An independent review of all mesh and fixation devices.

In our view, this would set the foundation for all future achievements. We believe that an independent review would bring to light the true extent of damage caused by mesh and enable progress to be made.

The Committee may be interested to note a hernia mesh patient in the USA has recently been awarded several million dollars after taking the mesh manufacturer to court. It was argued during the trial that the manufacturer had used non-medical grade polypropylene to make the mesh device, yet this device remains available on the market.

- Improved patient pathways.

We want patient pathways with specialist surgeons who are aware of complications, how to properly insert mesh and who can remove mesh if this is needed. We want to see a choice of surgeries where natural tissue repair is offered first, and we want better aftercare.

- Specialised Mesh Centre

We would like a mesh centre with more surgeons trained in natural tissue repair. (How the Scottish Government can say there is no need for this as there are very few numbers amazes us, and we feel this is another attempt from the Government at stalling tactics).

We are aware of a surgeon working in London who is a mesh specialist. This surgeon works privately and within the NHS doing removal and natural tissue repair, perhaps as he is closer to home, he would be a better candidate for assisting surgeons in Scotland. As the Scottish Government are not minded to develop a Shouldice type setting, maybe this surgeon offers an alternative option that could be provided via the current NHS system?

- Apology

We want recognition and an apology from the Scottish Government.

We feel the Scottish Government have completely ignored us over the past 8 years. We have campaigned alongside the transvaginal mesh women, the Government have spoken to us and were made aware of the issues with other mesh surgeries, but in our view they are still ignoring the issue.

- Compensation

We want compensated for the quality of life we have lost as a result of operations carried out within our health care system.

We have been damaged and feel that no-one is listening or even caring about us. We feel forgotten and left to the side. The woman with TVT mesh are no different from us, they have the same material inside them. Yes, placement is different, but how can it be recognised that transvaginal mesh has caused chronic pain, migration and auto-immune conditions in women, yet the concerns of patients with hernia, rectopexy and other meshes remain, in our view, ignored. If the Scottish Government were listening, they would understand it's not solely the placement of this device but also the material itself which causes issues. The Committee are aware from previous submissions to our petition that many mesh patients, myself included, have experienced chronic pain, migration of the mesh, and auto-immune conditions. Despite our experiences (and the medical evidence to support it), we do not feel the Scottish Government are taking our concerns seriously.

This is just what I would like to see happen under the petition.

I feel the Scottish Government have ignored me for 8 years, and the only way discussions are happening is through this petition. As petitioners, we feel there is more work to be done and would like to see the petition stay open so this can be continued.

We have 3 amazing MSPs helping and supporting us a lot, as well as amazing understanding from the petition committee. With this support, we are hoping there can be a parliamentary debate on the matter. We also hope to secure a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Health,

Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport, and the Chief Medical Officer.

Given that the woman with TVT are still struggling for healthcare within the centres that were provided for them, we feel it's also important this petition remains open to help support them. In our view, their voices still haven't fully been heard. We always knew we would have to fight for better healthcare together under this petition. This petition is our last chance to get what we feel should have already been in place.