

FREAK REACTION TO FLU VACCINE LED TO MAN'S AGONISING DEATH

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A father-of-three described as "a fit and lively chap" died in agony nearly four years after being given an influenza vaccination, an inquest heard yesterday.

Harry Richardson, from Bury in Lancashire, had been advised to have the injection in October 1992, but within days of being given the Flu Virin vaccine he experienced a 'pins and needles' sensation in his legs and was taken to hospital with paralysis, the hearing in Bury was told.

According to neuropathologist Helen Reed, the vaccination resulted in transverse myelitis - a swelling that badly damaged the spinal cord and left Mr Richardson, aged 60, paralysed from the chest down. He also developed massive pressure sores.

The cause of death was given as septicaemia, broncho-pneumonia and infected trophic ulcer as a result of spinal cord damage caused by the vaccine.

Coroner Barrie Williams recorded a verdict of misadventure, but said that doctors should not be put off giving the vaccine to those who needed it.

He added: "I have no doubt Mr Richardson was well advised and that Flu Virin was used in good faith. While it is an undoubted tragedy for his family the odds against this happening were huge."

The court heard that although Mr Richardson's reaction to the injection was rare, other cases have been reported and five people are known to have died from similar conditions.

The makers of Flu Virin, Surrey-based Evans Medical, said that since its production in the early 1980s some 65 million doses had been distributed throughout the world.

But Mr Richardson's family plan to take legal action against the firm. Sylvia Pilsworth, his common law wife for 16 years, said: I have waited for doctors to say that there are side-effects to this vaccination for a long time. Harry suffered horrendously and others should be warned about the hidden dangers.

"There may only be five recorded cases like Harry's, but that is five too many."

Chris Mihill, Medical Correspondent.

Source: Informed Parent 19/20

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