

Inquiry into the Regulatory Standards for the Approval of Medical Devices

- (i) Any other related matter

This statement is in relation to my personal experience with the recall of the ASR XL Depuy hip implant on Monday 10th January 2011 and the effects it has had on my emotional wellbeing, family and friends, marriage, career and day to day challenges in everyday life in general.

1. Emotional wellbeing

The thought of needing to make this statement annoys me. I know that justice must prevail for all of the people who have been inflicted with this faulty hip implant but it drains me physically, mentally as well as emotionally.

Every day there are random challenges in life for mainstream Australians. For me, getting out of bed and hoping that my body can cope with the riggers and demands is a completely different matter. I turned 40 years old in February 2011, 7 weeks after my third hip replacement. For the remainder of my life, I am unable to run, bush walk, and participate in any physical sport or even umpire. For the remainder of my life, I will face the pressures of feeling looked at and judged for not being able to be included in the activities that average 40 year olds take for granted.

2. Family & Friends

I am a mother of a 12 year old daughter and a 4 year old son. My daughter has seen her mother recover from three hip replacements before she turned 13. My son has witnessed two before he has turned 5.

The third lot of hip surgery has placed a lot of strain on my relationship with my daughter. She is now living with her father 80% of the time when before it was shared residency a 50-50 arrangement. After I left hospital at the end of January 2011, I was in extreme pain and coming home to face a very active pre-teen daughter and pre-kinder son was challenging. There was conflict within the first 24 hours and because I was unable to do anything around the house I felt the pressures immediately. It was decided that my daughter would live with her father until I recovered and back on track.

That was on Sunday 23rd January, and as I type this, it is now the 26th July 2011. My daughter stays with us every second weekend from Friday – Monday. I would like to think that this could return to the 50-50 arrangement but am afraid it may not.

During my two week stay in hospital; my son became quite clingy to his father. Seven months on we are still having anxiety issues around bedtime. It was because of my inability to sit on my son's bed to tell him bedtime stories for almost five months that he is more inclined to settle for his father than me.

We have taken our son to see a paediatrician because of his anxiety levels and interrupted sleep patterns. Unfortunately, my husband is happier to simply stay with our son until he falls asleep every night but now we are suffering from interrupted sleep every night. Sleep deprivation is now taking its toll on both my husband and the rest of us. If we have a bad night then everyone suffers, our work colleagues, students, family and extended family.

I know that my parents have been quite upset about seeing their first born daughter go through another lot of major surgery. My mother was so distressed on hearing about the hip recall surgery in December that she was not sleeping and the strain was evident for my father too. They were both concerned about whether I would be able to cope with the impending physical restrictions and financial loss from no income or limited opportunities. As my father had lost a lot of his unsecured superannuation in the financial crash, he was frustrated about not being able to help us out more as a family via financial help.

Since the hip recall surgery we have had to end our dream of building a new home. We have a sloping block of land but have realised that a two storey house may be more demanding on me physically. We have placed our block of land on the market. We have lost thousands of dollars from house designs! This has disappointed us immensely. We have to look at other options now.

3. Marriage

My marriage has definitely suffered. My husband's anxiety levels began to rise on our son's 4th Birthday as we sat in the surgeon's rooms in Hobart on Wednesday 22nd December 2010, this was the day we found out I would need the faulty hip implant removed. We had no idea how long the recovery process would take this time, (the third time). We were concerned about the pressures it would place on our family unit, extended family and our friends.

This recall surgery has made an impact on the intimate side of our relationship. My husband is so worried about injuring me physically if we have intercourse, due to the scar tissue and the delay in the muscle regrowth around the new prosthetic. Since April, (three months after surgery) we have attempted intimacy only three times but he is so stressed about possibly injuring me or the new implant that we don't bother anymore. I believe that my marriage is on the downhill slide. My husband and I argue every day without fail. I know that he is not interested in resuming an intimate relationship and as the weeks move on, I too feel that it is pointless to even suggest we give it another try.

4. Career

I have been teaching for 16 years and it is my passion for learning and motivating all students to learn that has kept my spirits up. Unfortunately, this places a huge strain on me psychologically when I know I can't live up to the physical demands of my specialist subject area; Dance/Drama. I can't go back to Dance/Drama teaching due to the physical constraints.

I had to turn down a job offer at the beginning of the school year because I could not drive until after my 6 week check with the surgeon. I then accepted a part time position but the driving to and from work was taking its toll on me yet again before 6 months had passed.

With a possible 25 years still ahead of me, I would like to think that I can recover fully from this third lot of surgery but I do not know what other health issues could be around the corner. This angers me the most because it is the metal poisoning from the faulty implant that could finish my career. Medical experts can't predict what this means for my long term health issues or the

health of others inflicted by the high levels of chromium and cobalt released into the blood stream.

Tomorrow (Wednesday 27th July), I will start a new job at a school I previously worked at in 2010. As I chatted with staff and students today (Tuesday 26th July), I was asked why I was still needing a walking stick. It is almost seven months since the recall surgery but people are amazed and shocked to know that I am not able to walk without a mobility aide. I try to be patient and explain to people that without the walking stick I walk with a limp as the muscles have not grown around the prosthetic yet or fully recovered.

5. Day to day challenges

- Needing to take my walking stick everywhere I go. Dropping the bloody walking stick when out and about in the world and then needing to pick it up off the floor or thank people graciously for picking it up for me.
- Finding a disabled car park at the Shopping Centre, City, Schools and parks.
- Grocery shopping in the supermarket, or needing to go to a shopping complex without being knocked over by other shoppers.
- Restrictions around the home – cleaning, cooking, washing the car.
- Going on family walks with my children, going out for family occasions.
- Making appointments for physio and hydrotherapy physio, plus trying to fit these appointments in around family demands and working commitments.
- Keeping calm when things don't go to plan – my tolerance levels are low.
- Attending a school assembly and other events...finding a place to sit without obstacles or being a bother to others.
- Ongoing health concerns; currently taking my 8th lot of antibiotics for the year. Recurring upper respiratory illnesses in 2010/2011.

I would be more than willing to be interviewed about the concerns I have discussed.