



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01378

Name of petitioner

Mairi Johnston

Petition title

Silicone Breast Implants - Rupture Awareness

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to raise awareness of the dangers of silicone breast implants and to urge the UK Government to ban the use of such implants and review the 3-year time bar rule for medical injury.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Campaign Not in Vain was written to raise awareness about the dangers of silicone supported by a personal story of serious illness resulting in 14 hospital operations. Reference is also made to 50 websites whose content supports the need for wider dissemination of the dangers of Silicone Implants.

A leaflet 'THE COLD HARD FACTS OF SILICONE' is ready to be circulated to unsuspecting women who want augmentation but are unaware of the dangers.

Catherine Stilher MEP tabled 3 questions:

1. Can the Commission explain why, despite evidence that Silicone implants do rupture and cause serious health implications, their use is still allowed in Europe and Britain?
2. What action is the Commission taking to ensure that people opting for breast enlargement including the timeline for replacement of implants, are given information about the hazards of silicone implants?
3. What plans have the Commission developed to inform women, who already have silicone implants, of the dangers of New Silicone Disease?

Nicola Sturgeon's first letter (via MP Danny Alexander) revealed she was glad the rupture issue had been brought to her attention. However, she stressed the Independent Review Group report found no scientific evidence between silicone gel implants and immune reactions.

Mr Verheugen (14/09/2009), on behalf of the European Commission, stated there are no scientific grounds to ban Silicone Breast Implants. The matter was transferred to local MSP, Rhoda Grant, who sent the Campaign to the Scottish Government.

Nicola Sturgeon's response (22/10/2009 via Rhoda Grant) stated that the Campaign material had been sent to the Health Facilities Scotland's Incident Reporting and Investigation Centre. She repeated her statement that there was no scientific relationship between silicone gel and immune reactions.

Danny Alexander's letter (2/09/2010) confirmed my correspondence regarding

concerns over the silicone implants has been sent from the Minister to the Health Facilities Scotland Reporting and Investigation Centre.

Shona Robinson's letter (29/10/2007 via Danny Alexander) recommended seeing a lawyer who specialises in medical negligence, stating concerns should be raised with local NHS Board and that courts have the discretion to extend this period; in some cases the time-bar can be extended to claim for injury in cases where:

- the injuries are sufficiently serious to justify bringing an action
- the injuries were attributable in whole or part to an act or omission
- the defender was a person whose act or omission were attributable in whole or part

R Carey, Chief Executive NHS Grampian (in his letter 31/07/) stated that, "from where augmentation took place in 1985, complaints must be made within 6 months of the operation". He recommended me to seek advice from Citizens Advice Bureau.

Petition background information

The Key Issues

Leaking silicone breast implants dangerously affect the health of women.

Millions of women, and now girls as young as 16, are undergoing breast implant surgery (boob jobs). Shockingly, some parents pay for this as a graduation or birthday gift. It has become trendy to have breast implant surgery. Celebrities flaunt their 'enhanced' breasts and young girls want to look like them. Famous faces in our everyday media have the money to get the implants replaced whenever they choose – and they have ready access to private health aftercare. However they are still vulnerable to illness. The gaunt look becomes noticeable when ailments strike, especially a few years after being implanted.

Implants rupture. It's a question of '**WHEN**' NOT 'if'. Professor Radford Shanklin, who was involved with Silicone Support UK, states that 60% of implants rupture by 10 years and by 20 years most will rupture. He also believes 90% of women get symptoms of silicone disease up to 10-20 years after augmentation.

Ruptures allow silicone gel to enter the bloodstream which insidiously assaults the body and ends up in a person's major organs including the lymph nodes, liver, kidneys, lungs and brain. The consequent illnesses are now classified as New Silicone Disease. However, there are:

- No tests to detect illness
- No records kept when it occurs
- No appropriate follow-up treatments.

This situation must change. Manifestations of silicone poisoning are hugely damaging to the women and their families. They also cost the country significant amounts of money in medical intervention and benefit claims due to ill-health.

Silicone Support Group UK (Margo Cameron, leader) was set up in 1992 to support women made ill by ruptured Implants. Sick women attended the group while other women cried down the phone for help as they encountered hosts of horrendous ailments.

The average account of ailments included a host of terrifying conditions including:

- memory loss,*
- extreme fatigue,*
- numbness,*
- tingling and pins and needles*
- inflammation around the body,*
- rashes,*
- headaches,*
- pain in joints and muscles,*
- flu-like symptoms, low grade fever,*

- irregular heartbeat,
- permanent cough,
- spitting up lumps of substance that goes brick hard when exposed to air,
- feeling of suffocation with lots of fluid forming in the lungs,
- mouth ulcers, dental infections,
- itchy scalp and skin, conjunctivitis,
- dry eyes,
- sore throats, dry mouth, swollen glands, enlarged painful lymph nodes,
- swollen spleen and stomach,
- colon problems,
- bladder infections,
- swelling behind knees (cluster of pea size nodes) extending up to top of thighs,
- crawling and pinching feeling up and down legs, j
- jerking of muscles,
- heavy period bleeding,
- high percentage of miscarriages and hysterectomies,
- and children of sick women having rheumatic disorders.

Women have also been diagnosed with an array of diseases including Fibromyalgia, Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Reynaud's Disease, Lupus and Multiple Sclerosis.

The dangers of silicone implants can no longer be denied. If someone was carrying a serious flu virus, warnings would be given immediately to fellow human beings. It is the same immune system that fights both the flu virus and invading silicone poisons.

People generally recover from flu and immunisations are produced to help this process. Silicone can silently leak from its casing and travel insidiously through the lymph system. Too late, the effects become apparent. And, no matter how hard it fights, the body cannot rid itself of this invader. Women have little hope of their condition being recognised, far less tested and successfully treated.

Dr. Diana Zuckerman's important evidence at the meeting on 8 June 2006 includes

"What happened for these women, and what we found in talking to women, is that most of them are happy with their implants for several years, sometimes for many years, but slowly and surely the implants break, they leak, the women don't know it, and usually, much longer than seven or ten years, they find out too late that the implants have leaked into their lymph nodes under the arm and from there can go to their lungs and their liver"

A genuine record is needed to gauge the experiences of augmented women and document the ailments they endure. Women should have regular scans with a scanner designed to detect even the smallest leakage of silicone gel. Implants should be removed immediately rupture occurs. But even this can be too late as the damage is already done. Although women know something is wrong, they cannot provide visible or tangible proof. A special scan is required to detect leaking silicone gel in the body.

Medical establishments recommend an MRI scan **after** 3 years to detect rupture. This means women whose ailments are not 'recognised' are effectively barred from having this scan. Where is their 'freedom of choice' when the medical profession refuses to acknowledge, far less recognise, their condition?

The UK law states that a complaint must be established **before** 3 years are up. Without doubt, there is a glaring discrepancy between these recommendations. Solicitors will only get involved in a case if a person complains about illness or rupture within 3 years of getting implanted. This is known as the three year time-bar. Complaints about a medical injury **must** be made before 3 years have passed. After this time, they will **not** be investigated.

However, most solicitors in the country said "because of the 3 year time bar for medical injury set up by the government they have no power to act". The Government has to change the law to allow investigation and action. The Law Society in Edinburgh could not provide either information or justice and actually asked me "what was happening with women regarding silicone breast implant concerns".

The 3-year time bar is too short. There should, in fact, be no time bar. It takes much longer, and may even be impossible, for women to obtain visible or tangible proof.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01378>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

13

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion