

**PE1463/ZZ**

Petitioner Letter of 22 September 2014

Effective Thyroid & Adrenal Testing & Diagnosis PE01463

22nd September 2014

To the Convener and Members of the Committee

I am pleased to note that the Scottish Government Listening Exercise commits to putting focus on the needs and experiences of patients with thyroid disorders. Again, I believe this will be a very useful exercise and I support it fully as a petitioner.

Additionally however, I still see a great deal of value in the suggestion of a committee run enquiry to run alongside this exercise. As you will have seen from the mass of evidence submitted, new research is coming through all the time which throws doubt on the wisdom of current clinical practice, some I will add below. Whilst realising that the committee are unable to dictate changes in clinical practice, I do believe that publicly discussing this evidence and calling it to medical attention has much merit in helping the plight of many thousands of desperate Scottish patients who are being let down and left to develop ever more serious diseases.

For example, in today's Daily Telegraph article about poor thyroid diagnosis and treatment Dr Vanderpump, Honorary Senior Lecturer in Diabetes and Endocrinology says of the TSH test "It is a crude test, one which does not take into account differences in height, gender or age. For example, what is a normal test for a pregnant woman will differ from that of an elderly person. In the current medical climate, there is greater demand for people to be treated using an algorithm set my computers, without doctors looking at the patient holistically, case by case." The membership of thyroid UK quoted in this article has increased since it was written from 11,000 to 19,000 which says something about the increasing failure of Endocrinology to help patients.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-health/11112141/Painful-proof-that-one-thyroid-test-does-not-fit-all.html>

I would also draw the committee's attention to a new study which supports point 2 in our petition asking that Adrenal Insufficiency be recognised and tested for. "Due to the high incidence of compensated/mild hypothyroidism we have a strong clinical suspicion of the coexistence of transient adrenocortical insufficiency...The mechanism of impaired

cortisol secretion in cases with hypothyroidism still has to be elucidated but our data support an adrenal rather than a pituitary affection...This finding could have important clinical implications especially in the setting of acute stress situations occurring during the period while a euthyroid state is still not achieved.”

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4142294/>

Finally, this study published by the American Thyroid Association discusses the benefits of treating subclinical hypothyroidism, something patients in Scotland are frequently denied.

“Patients with Hashimotos Thyroiditis and positive thyroid antibodies were more likely to present with overt hypothyroidism and a larger thyroid. Patients with antibody-negative Hashimotos Thyroiditis had a milder form of hypothyroidism at the time of diagnosis. This could represent an earlier stage of the disease or simply a less aggressive form of the disease. This study suggests that treating patients with subclinical hypothyroidism and positive thyroid antibodies is important to prevent the development of overt hypothyroidism. <http://www.thyroid.org/patient-thyroid-information/ct-for-patients/vol-7-issue-9/vol-7-issue-9-p-10-11/>

I look forward to hearing the next discussion of this petition at the Scottish Parliament and would like to once again thank you for taking the time to investigate this incredibly serious health issue affecting over a hundred thousand Scottish citizens.

Lorraine Cleaver  
Petitioner.