

£10M MESH VICTIM BACKS SCOTS SUFFERERS

This was never just about me. It was about every one of us

SPECIAL REPORT

■ Marion Scott

An American nurse who won almost £10million compensation after her life was destroyed by disastrous mesh surgery yesterday backed the Sunday Mail campaign revealing the plight of hundreds of Scottish victims.

Linda Gross, 47, from South Dakota, has been forced to have 18 further operations after being fitted with a Gynecare Prolift mesh implant.

The operation was supposed to correct pelvic organ prolapse.

But the surgery left her in constant pain, just like scores of Scots women whose lives have been ruined by similar procedures.

We have told how women have faced up to seven more ops as surgeons try in vain to remove mesh embedded into their organs.

Many patients claim they had not been properly warned about the risks involved in the procedure and were told that they were rare exceptions when they were left in agony afterwards.

Linda said: "When we started my case, I always knew that I was doing it for all the other victims as well as myself.

"I wanted to give all of us a voice, especially those of us who had been told our pain and complications were not real and that somehow, this was all our own fault.

"I now hope that the spotlight being shone on this epidemic will force all of those in authority to step forward and take courageous, definitive action to prevent more women from having this dangerous material placed in our bodies.

"Most of all, I sincerely hope that our success in the US court will encourage victims everywhere to support each other and collectively demand action be taken against the manufacturers to hold them accountable.

"I'd like the women in Scotland and the rest of the UK to know I am behind their campaign all the way and will continue to offer my support."

The brave mum of three offered her support after we spoke to more than 100 women left in agony after mesh surgery to correct bladder and pelvic floor prolapse.

Linda and her lawyer Adam Slater won the historic court case in New Jersey last month after a jury found that Gynecare manufacturers Ethicon, a subsidiary of medical giants

Former nurse speaks out to support victims of ops

"I don't think it is fair my life has come to a complete stop"

Johnson & Johnson, failed to adequately warn of all the complications that could occur.

Ethicon, who face thousands of new cases, have said they will appeal.

Other manufacturers of similar mesh products also face legal action in the US, Canada, Australia, New

Zealand and the UK. The formerly active nurse, forced to give up her job, told how she has been left almost bedbound and in constant pain.

She said: "I have become a different person. I was such a vibrant, energetic person who always put others first.

"Now, when people come to my house for a gathering, they know I have to lay in my bed for anything

between four to six hours. I have two wonderful granddaughters and the three-year-old climbs up on bed and holds her leg just like grandma.

"I'm at the point where I have to accept that this is now my life.

"I haven't given up but I don't think it is fair that, because of a minimally invasive procedure that was supposed to improve my quality of

life, my life has come to a complete stop."

Lawyers Cameron Fyfe, of Drummond Miller, and Victoria Ulph, of Martin & Co, are acting for scores of victims. Fyfe said: "This could lead to one of the biggest civil actions Scotland has ever seen."

Ulph said: "We have been inundated with calls from victims whose lives have been destroyed."

HEALTH MINISTER TO MEET VICTIMS

Health Secretary Alex Neil has vowed to meet Scotland's mesh victims within weeks after we revealed their terrible ordeal.

The move comes after a Sunday Mail campaign highlighted the plight of hundreds of women living with a devastating legacy of pain after controversial surgery for prolapse and bladder problems.

The women want the mesh scandal investigated and are determined to see changes, including better tracking of all implant operations through a register.

They also want new legal powers to force doctors who report complications to take



AGONY Linda faces life of pain after mesh op



PLEDGE Neil vows action if required

part in investigations when procedures go wrong.

Neil said: "I am concerned to hear about the experiences of these women.

"That is why I have agreed to meet a small group of women early in May to discuss any issues they have had as a result of transvaginal surgical mesh.

"I will ensure that any necessary action is taken following this discussion."

Mesh victim Linda McLaughlin, 57, from Greenock, said: "Alex Neil has a unique opportunity to show Scotland can lead the way by bringing in the simple changes needed to protect patients.

"Too many lives have been blighted by scandals such as PIP breast implants, hip implants and now this."

Shadow health secretary Jackie

Ballie said: "I'm delighted Alex Neil will meet victims and I'm very hopeful of a positive outcome.

"But given the number of victims and the seriousness of situation, a public inquiry is needed."

How **sunday mail** revealed terrible toll when ops go wrong

WEEK ONE
We reveal the ordeal of Scots women suffering years of agony and worry after mesh ops go wrong.

WEEK TWO
More than 100 victims contact us to reveal their suffering and claim they were never told of risks.

WEEK THREE
A patient whose life has been ruined by op reveals how her complaints were sidelined and ignored.