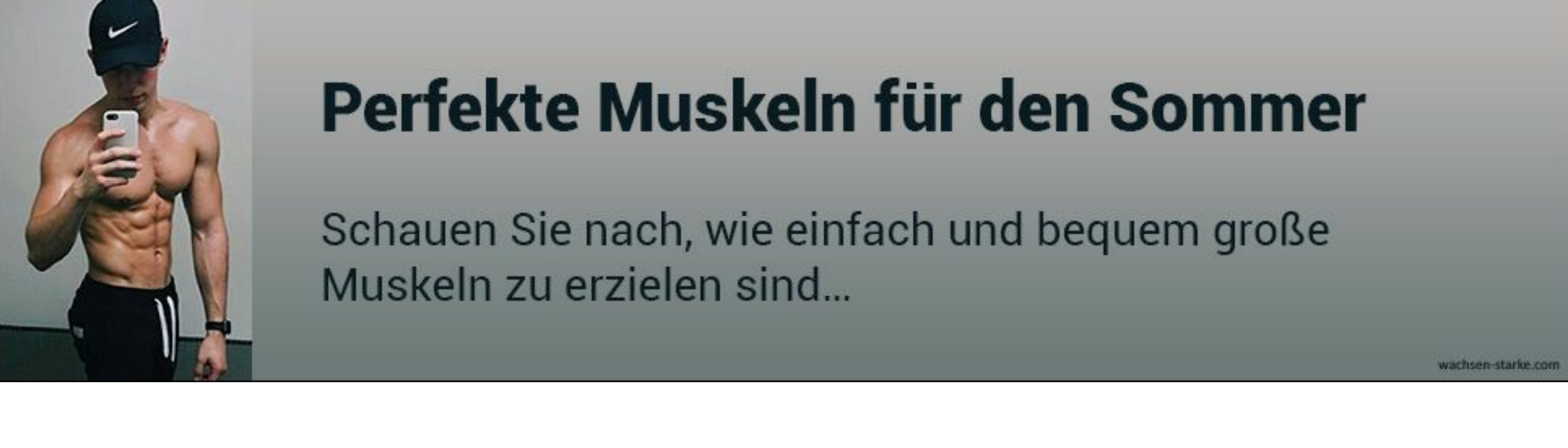




News > UK > Home News

Leukaemia patient whose sister had UK visa refused for stem cell transplant dies

Her death follows the Home Office U-turn that allowed the stem cell transplant to take place in January

Tom Batchelor | @_tombatchelor | Tuesday 18 July 2017 11:15 BST | 8 comments

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May Brown was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid leukaemia in July 2015 ACLT

A woman whose sister was refused entry to the UK to donate her “perfect match” bone marrow has died from **leukaemia**.

May Brown, 24, was told she needed an urgent stem cell transplant last year.

But her sister, Martha Brown, was blocked from travelling to Britain from Nigeria despite being a “10 out of 10” tissue match.



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According to the family, the **Home Office** said it was “not satisfied” that she would be a genuine visitor or had the funds to cover the costs of the trip.

That decision was overturned following a campaign, and the stem cell transplant was performed at King’s College Hospital in London in January.

The transplant appeared to have been successful and Martha returned to Nigeria, but three months later May, who had a three-year-old daughter, relapsed.

The 24-year-old, from Weymouth in Dorset, was told by consultants there was nothing more that doctors could do for her, and last Friday she died with loved ones, including her husband Mike, by her side.

The Home Office’s decision to temporarily halt Martha’s entry to the UK came despite a pledge by the **African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust** (ACLT) to cover the full costs of her trip.

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ACLT said Martha’s £222-a-month teacher’s salary was too low to meet entry requirements, despite the urgent medical needs of her sister.

May said at the time: “I was elated when I received the news Martha was a 10 out of 10 match. But when I received notification her visa was rejected, I felt distraught and helpless.

“My two-year-old daughter Selina needs me. She needs me to be back home with her, looking after her.

“To know my life isn’t important to those who have the power to help me is deeply upsetting. My life can be saved if my sister is granted to enter the UK to donate her stem cells.



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“This is a six-hour journey which will help save my life. I am begging for the UK Home Office to review their decision and grant my sister admission to the UK.”

A petition to grant Martha a visa attracted more than 60,000 signatures, and was delivered to the Home Office, which declined to comment on her case but said “all visa applications must be assessed against the **immigration** rules”.

Reversing the Home Office decision last October, immigration minister Robert Goodwill cited “compassionate and exceptional circumstances” in granting her leave to visit the UK.

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Ms Brown’s husband said in a statement after her death: “May will forever be remembered in our hearts. She was a strong, beautiful, supportive, wonderful wife and mother. Selina and I will truly miss her.

“May was incredibly grateful to the support given to her from ACLT, and I echo those words on behalf of me and our daughter Selina.

“May will forever remain in our hearts.”

Beverley De-Gale, co-founder of ACLT, said: “In the 18 months I’ve known her, I can say May was a remarkable woman who fought hard to beat this terrible illness.



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“Every member of the ACLT team is extremely saddened by her passing. Our thoughts are with her husband Mike, three-year-old daughter Selina and May’s sister Martha.”

As a result of the SaveMayBrown campaign, thousands more people were added to the stem cell register in the UK and Nigeria.

In a similar ongoing case, leukaemia sufferer Isaac Aganozor is appealing for his brother, Patrick, to be allowed to travel from Nigeria to the UK for a bone marrow transplant.

Patrick earns £69 a month as a tricycle courier, and was refused a visa by the British High Commission in Lagos after they said in a letter they were “not satisfied” he would leave at the end of his stay.

Isaac **told the Evening Standard**: “I was so happy when I found out that my brother was a match. But when his application was rejected it was a bigger shock than getting told I had leukaemia in the first place.

“The immigration officers didn’t consider my health, only economics.”

The Home Office said he was “free to submit a new application with supporting evidence”. ●

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Max Headroom 3 hours ago

... organs for transplant are regularly sent by courier ... why couldn't the bone marrow be extracted in Nigeria and flown to UK in the same way?

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-2 ||



P. UDOM 5 hours ago

The UK Home Office is to blame. To them, everything comes down to money.This is how they also deny young, bright but indigent students from developingcountries visas while fuelling purloining of public funds by governmentofficials by which the officials acquire visas to the UK easily.

Reply

+1 ||



Gerry westerby 6 hours ago

Er, the poor editing of this article headline has clearly led to readers erroneously concluding the Home Office barred the donor's entry into the UK and as consequence her sister died.

Reply

0 ||

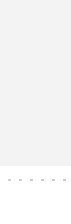


astarl 21 hours ago

Murderers!

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1 reply 0 ||



Max Headroom 3 hours ago

... good morning ... I am so disappointed that you have yet to comment with your usual bon mots on any of my comments ...

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-1 ||



seventrials 22 hours ago

Another person killed by our caring Government.

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-1 ||

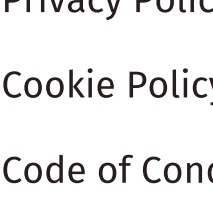


xpressanny 22 hours ago

This govt truly does have blood on its hands.

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