

**TIMES 2ND JAN. 1987**  
**Impeding flow of blood**

*From Mr Brian Meakin*

Sir, Following the Department of Health and Social Security statement and subsequent press reports concerning the inability of the blood transfusion services to provide an adequate supply of blood products for the United Kingdom, your readers may be interested to learn that this insufficiency is largely self-imposed by bureaucracy.

Blood processing is carried out for the National Blood Transfusion Service (of England and Wales) at the Elstree plant whilst the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service has its own laboratory in Edinburgh. The output from Elstree is limited by the plant and process which are largely outmoded and inefficient by modern standards. In contrast, production in Scotland is limited by the blood supply; the plant at Edinburgh is seriously underutilized, working at less than one-third of its current capacity. On more than one occasion a director of a regional transfusion unit, south of the border, has stated that blood collection could be doubled if only Elstree could process it. Because the Health Departments for England and Wales and Scotland are independent, blood is not sent north across the border.

In my view this state of affairs is nothing less than scandalous in the current deficiency situation which is disadvantageous to both patients and the taxpayer.

Yours faithfully,

BRIAN MEAKIN,

School of Pharmacy and

Pharmacology,

University of Bath,

Claverton Down,

Bath.

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