

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

AC(82)8

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE 5TH MEETING HELD ON 31 MARCH 1982 AT THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY, HANNIBAL HOUSE
ELEPHANT AND CASTLE.

Present:

Dr E L Harris - Chairman

Members

Mr A B Baker - RA, Northern RHA
Dr J Darnborough - RTD, East Anglian RHA
Dr I D Fraser - RTD, South Western RHA
Dr H H Gunson - Consultant Adviser
Dr R S Lane - Director, Blood Products Laboratory
Mr T R Layzell - RT, Wessex RHA
Prof J A Scott - RMO, Trent RHA
Dr W Wagstaff - RTD, Trent RHA

Secretariat

Dr D Walford	}	DHSS
Dr P Clarke		
Mr S Godfrey		
Mr S Green		

Observers

Dr A E Bell - SHHD
Dr J D Cash - National Medical Director, Scottish NETS
Dr R F Doyle - Welsh Office
Mr J Harley - DHSS
Dr G T N Lawson - DHSS N Ireland

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1 Apologies had been received from Miss Blenkinsop (who had replaced Miss Schofield as RNO member) and Dr Rue (for whom Professor Scott was deputising).

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - AC(81)20

- 2 These were agreed.

MATTERS ARISING

a. Fractionation of Plasma from N Ireland

- 3 Dr Bell reported that the Department of Health and Social Services, N Ireland and the Scottish Home and Health Department had made considerable progress in formulating arrangements for the fractionation of plasma (both fresh-frozen and time-expired) from N Ireland at PFC Liberton. Provided the logistics of transport could be ironed out in time, it was hoped to begin operations by the end of April. The meeting noted with satisfaction the progress made.

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b. Charging Non-NHS Hospitals

- 4 Mr Godfrey reported that consultations with the medical profession on the proposal to introduce handling/processing charges for blood and blood derivatives supplied to non-NHS hospitals had almost been completed. If charges were introduced, the likely effective date would be 1 October 1982. Health Authorities would be consulted about the terms of the draft circular in the usual way.

PLASMA SUPPLY

a. Minutes of the Meeting of the Plasma Supply Working Party - AC(82)1

- 5 Dr Gunson explained that the Working Party had considered recent trends in Factor VIII yield and had concluded that the estimated quantity of plasma required to achieve self-sufficiency in blood products should remain at 435,000 kg per annum. This was endorsed by members.
- 6 Dr Gunson reported that encouraging progress had been made in the establishment of a machine plasmapheresis centre in Bradford, where it was hoped to have 6 machines in use by June 1982. North Western RHA planned to set up a manual centre in Lancaster with assistance from DHSS under the Special Medical Development Funding. The centres would provide other Regions with an opportunity to assess the relative merits of manual and machine plasmapheresis for harvesting routine plasma and much practical information would be learnt from their establishment.

b. Consultation with RHAs

- 7 Mr Godfrey reported that DHSS had asked all RHAs for an indication of their ability and willingness to increase the supply of fresh-frozen plasma to BPL. 12 regions had replied to date, all of whom supported the principle of self-sufficiency. Several regions doubted their own ability to achieve their notional target (based on population) by the mid '80s and had suggested a gradual progression towards the target figure. The Committee felt that a phased build-up to 435,000 kg was a reasonable proposition which would enable account to be taken of changes in product yield. The Secretariat were asked to summarise RHAs' responses for the Committee's information.

c. Supply of Fresh-Frozen Plasma to BPL - AC(82)2

- 8 The Committee noted the information contained in AC(82)2, in particular the growth in plasma supplied to BPL between 1979 and 1981. Dr Lane explained that the upgraded laboratory now had capacity to process all available fresh-frozen plasma.

STOCK CONTROL AND RECORD KEEPING IN THE NBTS AND HOSPITAL BLOOD BANKS -
AC(82)3, AC(82)6.

- 9 The Chairman explained that having received the report of the Committee of Inquiry which investigated allegations concerning misuse of blood and blood products at the National Heart Hospital, the Secretary of State had asked Dr Wagstaff, as Chairman of RTDs, to undertake a survey of record keeping in the NBTS. On behalf of the Secretary of State the Chairman thanked Dr Wagstaff and Dr Gunson, who had assisted, for having undertaken the task and having produced such a detailed report for the Committee.

10 Dr Wagstaff explained that because of the limited time available the survey had concentrated on the issue of blood from RTC s to hospital blood banks. There were inevitable variations in practice and while RTCs could account for all blood issued, it was evident that without a full examination of hospital blood bank records, it was not possible to determine how the blood issued by RTCs had been used. This weakness had underlined the need to consider a similar detailed review of the records kept by blood banks with a view to revising the guidance issued by DHSS in 1964 (HM(64)5). Transfusion Directors had suggested that the new guidance should include provision for consultant haematologists in charge of blood banks to provide RTCs on a regular basis with details of blood used. It was felt that computerised record keeping systems, with links between the RTC and hospital blood banks, would provide better control but it was recognised that the resource implications of installing such a system had to be carefully assessed and balanced against the potential benefits. Members stressed, however, that it was in the interest of patients' and donors' health for each unit of blood to be traceable from donation to transfusion or disposal. Accountability, whilst important, was secondary to the safety of patients.

11 After discussion, it was agreed that

- i. DHSS Management Services Division should be consulted about options for record keeping systems for blood and blood products;
- ii. Mr Baker would discuss within Northern Region the practicalities of introducing a monthly summary of blood use, to be completed by hospital blood banks for the information of the RTC; and, in the light of i. and ii,
- iii. DHSS guidelines on supplies of blood to hospitals should be updated. The opportunity should be taken to draw attention to the booklet "Notes on Transfusions" which was being revised by RTDs.

INTRA-REGIONAL CHARGING - AC(82)4

- 12 Mr Godfrey explained that a detailed system of charging had not yet been formulated but that DHSS Finance Division would welcome the Committee's views on the principle and practicalities of (a) charging for Central Blood Laboratories' products, and (b) Intra-Regional Charging by Transfusion Centres.
- 13 On the question of charging for CBL products, members noted the possible advantages of such a scheme but were concerned about the additional administrative costs it would entail and asked that DHSS should bear these in mind in preparing a more detailed paper for the consideration of Regional Treasurers.
- 14 Members saw little advantage in a system of intra-regional charging and did not accept some of the arguments outlined in AC(82)4, particularly concerning the place of blood and blood products in the hierarchy of local priorities. The Committee expressed doubts about how an intra-regional charging scheme would work in practice. Mr Layzell offered to consult District Treasurers within Wessex and report back to the Committee.

SALE OF SURPLUS MATERIAL; REQUEST FROM HD SUPPLIES - AC(82)5

- 15 Mr Godfrey explained that all RTD's in England and Wales had been approached by HD Supplies concerning the possible purchase of syphilitic plasma. The Committee agreed that the material was surplus to NBTS requirements and that RHAs should, if they so wished, co-operate with the company. The price offered (£50 per litre) was considered not unreasonable. Mr. Godfrey was asked to seek the Company's

assurance that it would continue to offer VDRL Carbon Particle Antigen for use by RTCs.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 16 It was agreed that, depending on the progress on the review of record keeping, the next meeting would be held on 28 July or 15 September 1982.

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