

Mr Windsor
ID

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7043

AIDS LEAFLET

1. I was taken somewhat by surprise by your revisions to the text for this leaflet. Whilst none of us think it a particularly exquisite piece of drafting we nevertheless have to tread very carefully in altering it because of course it is not our leaflet. Really I was not envisaging us altering it simply to improve the English but only where we are not satisfied with the content.

2. Having discussed your version with Dr Walford MEDSEB I am afraid there are some things which are either incorrect or misleading.

In detail our comments are:

Page 1 Line 1 "Deficiency" not "Dificiency"
19 "cities with large homosexual populations"

Page 2 Line 3 To use the phrase "in reality" is too firm. Not enough is known about this disease to be sure it is so rare. There may, for example, be a milder form (as yet unidentified), as there are with other comparable diseases. Say instead "But, in fact, AIDS appears to be a rare disease".

Page 2
Lines 6 - 8 This is not strictly true. AIDS can probably be transmitted by activities wider than those normally thought of as lying within the definition of sexual intercourse. "Intimate contact" would be a better phrase, but we think on balance it would be better to take out this sentence altogether. It has no relevance to blood donors.

Page 2
Line 10 Again this is too definitive. Say instead "At present there are very few cases of AIDS in Britain - "

Page 2
penultimate line Why alter this from "only about 10 cases"? "Less than 12" is a nonsense, and "less than 20" less reassuring.

Page 3
Lines 1 - 4 This is totally wrong and bears no relation to anything in the original text. I should be interested to know where this disinformation came from. All blood products imported from America are made from blood which has been bought from the "donor". The donated blood in America is not used to make blood products.

Page 3
penultimate line Say "and as there is no screening test for AIDS it is considered most unlikely"

3. With regard to your reservations about delaying publication pending Ministers approval, I think this cuts across the whole purpose of the leaflet. The object of this exercise is to take, and to be seen to be taking, urgent action to reduce the risk of AIDS being spread through blood transfusions by seeking to exclude those donors thought most likely to be carriers of AIDS. Any delay obviously reduces its effectiveness. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that a minor epidemic of AIDS could break out in the near future. The Americans are already getting worried about it (only today for example the press carries a story about the Mayor of New York having to issue a "don't panic" appeal). I should have thought we are not likely to earn the gratitude of Ministers for delaying a measure designed to reassure blood donors and reduce the risk of AIDS when they are being asked awkward questions what the Department is doing and why action was not taken before. It is worth remembering that this leaflet is a low-key measure compared to the examination and questioning of donors which the FDA in the USA has instituted.

4. Moreover, in view of increasing international concern about the rising number of AIDS cases in Europe the Committee of Experts on Blood Transfusion and Immunology will be submitting a draft recommendation to the Council of Europe's Health Committee on 20 June and later that day the text will be submitted to Minister's Deputies for approval. One of the items in the recommendation will be the provision of information to all donors so that those at risk will abstain from donating.

5. To sum up then, I think we can accept your text subject to the comments above, but it is essential to act without delay. As it is, the time for printing and distribution seems painfully slow. Some of the Directors were of the opinion that they could get leaflets printed locally in a matter of days. Perhaps we should let them, and meet the individual bills.

GRO-C

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cc Mr Cashman
Dr Walford
Mrs Hewlett-Davies
Mr Bolitho
Miss Brown

M. Parker O/R