

AMD\4604108.05



Richmond House 79 Whitehall London SW1A 2NS Telephone 071 210 3000
From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Your Ref: MH/GJ/Con/Health

POH(3)4604/108

Mike Hall Esq MP

19 MAY 1995

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 27 March to Virginia Bottomley on behalf of two of your constituents about the Haemophilia Society's campaign on behalf of those patients with haemophilia who have been infected with hepatitis C. I am sorry you have not received an earlier reply.

I am sorry to read that the son of the two constituents who have contacted you about the campaign suffers from haemophilia.

We have great sympathy with those patients who may have become infected with hepatitis C through blood transfusions or blood products.

Most haemophilia patients were infected with hepatitis C before blood products were treated to destroy viruses. These patients received the best treatment available in the light of medical knowledge at the time.

The Health Departments are considering a range of potential initiatives to improve the understanding, treatment and management of hepatitis C. This could include encouragement of research into the condition and guidance to the NHS on best practice where there is a clinical consensus.

The Government does not accept, however, that there has been negligence and we have no plans to make payments to such patients. On the more general issue of compensation, the Government has never accepted the case for a no fault scheme of compensation for medical accidents. It is unfair to others and still requires proof of causation which is often difficult to establish. Every individual case where a medical accident has occurred is a personal tragedy for both the individual concerned and their family. If the NHS is proved negligent in a Court, it accepts its liability to pay damages.



It is the Government's view that the most effective use of resources is to seek to improve the understanding, management and treatment of the condition. Only in this way can the impact of the disease on individual patients and their families be effectively minimised.

This Department is supporting an initiative by the Haemophilia Society to undertake a study into the best way to support its members who are infected with the virus.

I hope that this will reassure you that the Government will do all it can to care for those affected.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "y-m", written above a rectangular box.

A rectangular stamp with a dashed border. Inside the box, there is a handwritten signature and the text "GRO-C" printed to the right of the signature.

TOM SACKVILLE