

# Whitehall cover-up hid dangers of tainted blood

Antony Barnett, Public Affairs Editor  
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The Observer

Thousands of people have been infected with a lethal virus following blunders by the Department of Health in the Eighties that led to one of 'the gravest disasters in the history of the NHS'.

The Observer has obtained secret Whitehall documents showing successive governments failed to stop the scandal that involved thousands of patients being given blood products contaminated with the hepatitis C virus which can lead to chronic liver disease and cancer.

The disclosure follows our revelation two weeks ago that more than 110 haemophiliacs have died of hepatitis C after being given Factor 8 to help their blood clot.

Some 1,200 haemophiliacs who contracted HIV through Factor 8 have benefited from an £80 million-plus compensation package, but those who died or are dying from hepatitis C have not received a penny. Tomorrow the Haemophilia Society begins demanding justice for them.

Successive governments have said there was no negligence by the state. Yet The Observer has seen evidence to suggest otherwise. Had the Department of Health listened to medical advice, hundreds of lives may have been saved and thousands more would not have been at risk.

It was known by the mid-Seventies that Factor 8 carried a high risk of hepatitis contamination. But the department says that at the time hepatitis C was thought to be such a mild disorder the benefits of Factor 8 outweighed risks. But as early as 1978 it was warned of the severity of hepatitis C.

Professor Eric Preston, one of the country's leading haemophilia experts, was so concerned he advised that those suffering from mild haemophilia should be given a safer synthetic product called DDAVP.

More than a third of haemophiliacs suffer so mildly that, had they been warned of the risk from Factor 8, they are likely to have chosen an alternative and safer treatment.

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### Weather

**UK: Rain, sun, and clouds**

**Summary: Breezy with showers**

Most of the day will be overcast with rain, but some sun will appear in the afternoon. The rain will be heaviest in the north and west, but will ease in the south and east. There will be a few showers of rain in the south and east, but the rain will be heaviest in the north and west. The rain will be heaviest in the north and west, but will ease in the south and east. There will be a few showers of rain in the south and east, but the rain will be heaviest in the north and west.

**World yesterday**

**Outlook: Tomorrow**

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**Europe today**

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**Around Britain yesterday**

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# "I feel sorry for the people who get this terrifying letter..."

**FROM THE EDITOR**

The Department of Health could be putting itself in a very awkward position if it were to publish a letter to the people of the United Kingdom, saying that it is sorry for the people who get this terrifying letter. The letter is a letter from the Department of Health, saying that it is sorry for the people who get this terrifying letter. The letter is a letter from the Department of Health, saying that it is sorry for the people who get this terrifying letter.

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## Do not treat us like pariahs

**By Louise Hooper**

It is a sad and shameful state of affairs that the people of the United Kingdom are being treated like pariahs. The people of the United Kingdom are being treated like pariahs. The people of the United Kingdom are being treated like pariahs.

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# ONCE AGAIN UNDERMINED BY METATARSAL JINX to lose his footing

**PAUL JOYCE**

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WALKING WOUNDER - THE CASUALTY LIST

**CRICKET CAPTAIN** England skipper David Gower has been hit by the jinx that has plagued him since he was a schoolboy. The jinx is the metatarsal jinx, which has caused him to lose his footing on many occasions. The jinx is the metatarsal jinx, which has caused him to lose his footing on many occasions.

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## Keane: You have no world class

**By Richard Thomas**

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## Sven hit by midfielder's 12-week lay-off

**FROM THE EDITOR**

The Swedish national football team has been hit by a 12-week lay-off of a key midfielder. The lay-off is a result of an injury sustained by the player. The lay-off is a result of an injury sustained by the player.

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