

BY FAX

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cc: Dr A Rejman- MEDISD
Mr M Fuller -PD

ACVSB Meeting on Hepatitis C Testing

As requested, I attach a draft letter to members telling them that the next meeting has been brought forward. It also sets out the questions which we think need to be considered.

All the members of the sub group are available on the proposed date of 2 July.

A membership list is also attached in case you wish to address the members by name.

The draft minutes of the last meeting will be ready next week.

GRO-C

DRAFT

Dear Member

ACVSB Meeting

Your will recall from the last ACV^SB meeting that a sub group was set up to prepare a protocol for a study to investigate the significance of positive findings using the ELISA hepatitis C antibody screening tests.

This group comprising Drs Gunson, Mitchell, Mortimer and Tedder met on 23 May together with Departmental officials and considered that an extended study of RIBA and PCR techniques might not be appropriate in light of additional scientific knowledge and FDA approval of the hepatitis C antibody test.

In the circumstances I think it would be prudent to bring forward the next meeting of the ACVSB to 2 July 1990 to consider again whether blood donations should be routinely screened for hepatitis C antibody. I appreciate the difficulties in making time available for meetings at short notice. However I hope as many as possible will be able to attend in view of the importance of the issue to be discussed.

This special meeting will be devoted entirely to hepatitis C screening. I outline in the annex specific questions which I believe we need to address when formulating our advice to Ministers. If there are others which you think also need to be considered you will be very welcome to raise them at the meeting.

It would be helpful if those of you preparing the protocol (Q3) and the UKBTS action chart (Q4) could make them available for circulation by the Secretariat prior to the meeting.

I apologise for the short notice of this meeting but events seem to dictate that we should consider again at an early date our advice to Ministers on hepatitis C testing. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

Yours sincerely

Dr J S Metters

Annex

Meeting of ACVSB at 11.00 Monday 2 July in Room 63 Hannibal House, Elephant & Castle, London

Subject

Hepatitis C Antibody Screening Test

Questions to be considered:-

- 1) What new information is available about the screening tests themselves, or on the use of supplementary (RIBA) and confirmatory (PCR) testing methods?
- 2) Has the FDA decision to approve the test and decisions of other countries to implement testing been influenced by some scientific or other information which has now become available?
- 3) Are there any advantages attached to either of the two tests currently available (Abbott and Ortho) in respect of specificity, sensitivity, operational ease of use, cost?
- 4) If routine testing were to be introduced what implications would this have for the UK BTS? How would positive fundings be dealt with? What supplementary or confirmatory testing would be required and where would this be carried out? How and when would the donor be counselled?

The UK BTS are reconsidering their action chart tabled at the last meeting and will put forward a revised version for discussion at the meeting.

- 5) If testing is to be introduced in the UK should it be limited to whole blood or also extended to plasma donations bearing in mind the supposed efficacy of heat treatment? Are all current methods of viral inactivation successful in respect of hepatitis C?

A copy of a draft protocol for a proposed FDA study related to plasma is enclosed. This was kindly supplied by Dr Gunson.

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