

Robert Finch

Hazel, You asked for some background on this issue + whether there was any substance to the allegations. The group involved with the Journal are the Manor House Group who have always been the most outspoken and radical on the conspiracy theories. Informal enquiries made by officials ~~do~~ hasn't thrown up anything that we should be concerned about. We should await the GMC investigation, but keep an eye on it. Happy to discuss.

From: Zubeda Seedat
Date: 21 May 2005

Copy: Denise O'Shaughnessy

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22/5

HAEMOPHILIA - HEPATITS C TESTING BACKGROUND NOTE TO PO1022838 - LORD MORRIS OF MANCHESTER

1. As requested I attach a background note to the above PO case.
2. Lord Morris of Manchester has asked DH Ministers to look into the allegations that many haemophilia patients were tested for hepatitis C without their knowledge or consent and that positive results from those tests were withheld from patients, in some cases for several years.
3. We have sought general comments on these allegations from a number of clinicians to help understand the issues that influenced clinicians' decisions in the early/mid 90s.
4. We understand that one reason HCV antibody tests may have been undertaken on haemophilia patients without their written consent is because it was practice at the time to get verbal consent. In the late 80s/early 90s all of those patients with abnormal liver function tests were told that they had non-A and non-B hepatitis, and when hepatitis C was described these patients will have been told that their non-A and non-B hepatitis was likely to be hepatitis C. Definitive tests for hepatitis C were only done in a few centres early on with the majority not happening until 1992.
5. The question of informed consent for any disease or testing process is treated much more seriously nowadays, but the practice at the time was quite different.
6. The GMC are conducting an investigation looking into the action of doctors responsible for the treatment of blood-borne treatment. It would be inappropriate to comment on the substance of the allegations while the GMC investigation is underway.

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Thurs. 23/06
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