



20th September 1995

Dr Jeremy Metters
Deputy Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

Dear Jeremy,

SACTTI

This Standing Advisory Committee on Transfusion Transmitted Infections is an expert advisory group which forms part of the Committee structure reporting to the executive committee of the UKBTS/NIBSC Liaison Group chaired by Dr W Wagstaff. I am enclosing a family tree of this committee structure for clarification. Prior to 1993 Dr Gunson had chaired SACTTI's predecessor the ACTTD (Advisory Committee on Transfusion Transmitted Disease) which he had set up to provide him with expert professional advice for the Transfusion Service. In 1993 with the advent of the NBA it was felt to be more appropriate for the ACTTD to become part of the UKBTS/NIBSC Liaison Committee structure with specific terms of reference as follows:-

- To advise the UKBTS/NIBSC Liaison organisation, the NBA and SNBTS on all matters concerned with the possible transmission of infection by the transfusion of blood, its components and, via donor plasma, fractionated plasma products. This advice should also cover the possible transmission of infection by other banked tissues processed by and held at Transfusion Centres.
- To commission, conduct and co-ordinate trials of new technology involved in the screening of donors for infectious agents transmissible by transfusion, consistent with the work of the national research committees.

The UKBTS/NIBSC Liaison Group was set up in 1988. Its primary purpose is to produce and continually update guidelines covering all aspects of the work and services provided by the UK Transfusion Services. It has been extremely successful and is about to produce the third updated guidelines and now has a mechanism for regular updating. The "Red Book" guidelines is now a Quality Assurance controlled document throughout the UK Transfusion Services and has been an essential tool to ensure that transfusion centres meet the MCA licensing requirements.

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Accountability for each standing Advisory Committee including SACTTI is quite clear and it is to the executive committee of the UKBTS/NIBSC Liaison Group chaired by Dr W Wagstaff and on which both the National Medical Director for England and Scotland sit. Chairpersons of each SAC reports to this executive committee and any recommended course of action should be directed from this executive committee.

SACTTI is therefore an expert professional advisory committee advising the UK Transfusion Services and reporting to the executive committee of the UKBTS/NIBSC Liaison Group.

In my view, and I have discussed this with Dr Wagstaff and Professor John Cash it would be inappropriate for there to be any formal reporting links between SACTTI and the MSBT. The remit of these respective committees is quite different i.e. SACTTI is the expert professional advisory group for the UK Transfusion Services and their respective national Medical Directors, whereas the MSBT is an expert advisory group advising ministers on policy. An attempt to formalise links between these two committees at this particular moment in time could potentially compromise their respective remits which would be both inadvisable and inappropriate.

I hope this satisfactorily clarifies for you the relationship of SACTTI to the UK Transfusion Services and I apologise if there has been any confusion with regard to the way the SACTTI has been functioning in recent months. There will shortly be a change of chairmanship of SACTTI and I will ensure that the new chairman is aware of the remit of this committee, its accountability and reporting lines, to avoid any future confusion.

Thank you for your advice and understanding on this matter.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

Dr E Angela E Robinson
Medical Director