

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

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HHG/LB

23rd October 1990

Dr. A. Rejman,
Senior Medical Officer,
Department of Health,
Eileen House,
80-94 Newington Causeway,
LONDON. SE1 6EF

Dear Andrej,

ANTI-HBc TESTING OF DONATIONS

I enclose a copy of a paper written by workers at the Sheffield RTC in which they recommend that blood donors who present with a history of jaundice more than 12 months previously, which with our current policy are acceptable if they are HBsAg negative, should be tested for anti-HBc.

Sheffield RTC have continued to pursue this policy and whilst it was only taking place at one RTC it could be regarded as an extension of their study. However, I have had a letter from Dr. Martlew at the Liverpool RTC advising me that they have also adopted this policy. Also, Peter Flanagan, one of the authors of the paper, has now obtained a consultant post at Leeds RTC and would like to introduce anti-HBc screening on donors giving a history of jaundice at that Centre.

I think it would be desirable to have a uniform policy for this testing, since I am concerned that piecemeal introduction results in different standards of testing in the RTCs and we could be criticised for this if a claim resulted for transmission of HBV from such a donor.

At an early meeting of the ACVSB Professor Zuckerman raised this point, but no decision was reached. There was a suggestion that this question might be addressed to the Department's Advisory Group on Hepatitis which, although theoretically still in existence, has not met for several years. Their last recommendation with respect to anti-HBc screening was that it should not be undertaken.

WTD/ 1484

Perhaps this is a matter which can be considered by ACVSB if you considered that revitalising the Advisory Group on Hepatitis was too difficult.

I will be grateful for your views.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

H.H. GUNSON,
National Director

WTD/ 1485