

Miss Stuart

ccL Mr Rose  
Dr Steadman  
Dr Harris

HEPATITIS B VACCINATION

Thank you for your minute of 5 March, with which I agree. We cannot prevent the JCVI from making recommendations but we must certainly warn Ministers of the possibility of such recommendations, and the cost consequences, first. We could then at least indicate to the JCVI, if necessary, the likelihood that financial restraints might make any recommendations impossible to fulfil.

This means a submission to Ministers and I think we have enough information now on which one could be based. This would be on the lines that a vaccine is already in production in various parts of the world, that it is likely to be licensed here, and that supplies will be limited for some considerable time and that courses of vaccination will be very expensive and that there will be pressure from large groups of people for priority in vaccination. We could then set out the groups likely to be seeking vaccination and the numbers.

MED MCD has information, admittedly not very hard, to hand and we could deal with the submission, clearing it with you, if you wished.

GRO-C

8 March 1982

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Dr Geffen

HEPATITIS B VACCINATION

I have now seen the minutes of the joint working group's meeting on January 19th and I am concerned about what is said in para.5 about making the JCVI recommendations on the use of this vaccine generally available to enable vaccine manufacturers to estimate the likely size of the market in the U.K.

The cost implications of the proposals which are emerging are very considerable and Ministers may not feel able to accept recommendations for free availability for all those in Category A, let alone Category B when vaccine supplies become available. It would therefore seem most unwise to make the recommendations known until after they have been accepted by Ministers. To do otherwise might prove highly awkward and embarrassing as well as being misleading to the manufacturers. It may be that this was what was intended. If not ought this not to be set right at the next meeting on March 16th. We can discuss at our meeting on March 11th if necessary.

MISS M E STUART  
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5 March 1982

c.c. Dr Steadman  
Mr Rose  
Mr Jones