

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

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HHG/LB

10th May 1991

Dr. H. Pickles,  
Department of Health,  
80-94 Newington Causeway,  
LONDON. SE1 6EF

Dear Hilary,

EXTENDED TRIAL OF ANTI-HCV TESTING

This letter is to confirm our telephone conversations on 9th May 1991.

Dr. Lloyd's premature introduction of the test can be used to extend the scope of the evaluation of 2nd generation anti-HCV tests. Currently, the 10,600 samples from the multi-centre trial are being tested with Abbott and Ortho 2nd generation tests and a proportion of these samples have been tested using Organon and UBI tests.

My current proposal, with which you agreed, is to ask two RTCs to commence a trial using Ortho 2nd generation test kits, to ask Dr. Lloyd to include his current test results in an extended national trial using Abbott 2nd generation tests and to respond to Professor Cash's offer for the inclusion of Glasgow RTC also using the Abbott test.

I have spoken to Dr. Angela Robinson at Leeds RTC and Dr. Vanessa Martlew at Liverpool RTC and both have agreed to test blood donations using Ortho test kits. They will, of course, have to obtain the required equipment but in conversation with Ortho, I understand that Leeds RTC is due to receive their equipment within the next week and Liverpool should be equipped before the end of May.

Preliminary starting dates for the trial are 20th May at Leeds and 10th-17th June at Liverpool. Both RTCs have received funding for anti-HCV, but because their start dates have been brought forward from 1st September financial assistance with the confirmatory tests, which will be an essential part of the trial, should be made available.

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I have set out on the attached sheet the estimated costs for confirmatory tests for Liverpool and Leeds RTCs. I have spoken to Dr. Lloyd and he is willing to include his current results in the extended trial. He has funding for confirmatory tests.

I have also spoken to John Cash and he has agreed that Glasgow RTC will take part in the extended trial and that SNBTS will be responsible for funding the exercise in Scotland.

I will send a draft protocol to you early next week.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this difficult matter.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

H.H. GUNSON,  
National Director

c.c. Mr. M. Fuller

EXTENDED TRIAL OF ANTI-HCV TESTING AT  
LEEDS AND LIVERPOOL RTCs

Leeds RTC	-	650 donations per day for 8 weeks	=	26,000
Liverpool RTC	-	450 donations per day for 4 weeks	=	9,000
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total				35,000
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Estimated number of ELISA repeatable positives at 0.5% = 175

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Cost of RIBA-2 tests at £32.00 each*			=	5,600
Cost of PCR at £100 (estimated) per test**			=	17,500
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total				23,100
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\* To be performed at Manchester PHLS at a quoted price  
 \*\* To be performed at PHLS, Colindale