


1. Mr Pudlo CA OPU2
(Agreed 29/5)
2. Mr Robb HP3B

From : Ann Towner C OPUS
Date : 24 May 1996
Copy : Dr Rejman CA OPU2 (o/r)

BRIEFING FOR HEPATITIS AWARENESS WEEK


1. Dr Rejman's response of 23 May was copied to us with the background so that we could consider commenting further.
2. Dr Rejman's para 4 suggests a reply to a question on page 5. This may be too long for your purposes. You may like to substitute :

"Hepatitis B and C have in the past been transmitted by blood or blood products. Current measures have minimised that risk. Donors likely to transmit the virus are excluded from giving blood, and all blood donations are tested for these viruses (among others). [Further tests are carried out on the plasma pools from which products such as Factor VIII are made, and fractionated blood products are heat treated to destroy viruses such as hepatitis B and C.]"




3. I can offer the following addition to the proposed reply to the last Q&A on page 5 :

"The Department is also funding the Haemophilia Society in its research into the needs of haemophiliacs who have been infected with hepatitis C."



4. You may also need Q&A on calls for compensation for those infected with hepatitis C through blood or blood products. I suggest the following reply :

"The Government has great sympathy for those infected with hepatitis C as a result of NHS treatment, but these patients received the best treatment available in the light of medical knowledge at the time. No fault or negligence on the part of the NHS has been proved, and we have no plans to make special payments. Our view remains that the best way the government can help is to encourage research, and best treatment for those infected, as well as supporting voluntary groups working with those infected. This we are already doing."



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