



ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN



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HAEMATOLOGY DEPARTMENT

5 July 1988

Dr R Mitchell
Director
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Dear Ruthven

Thank you for your letter defining the NHS Factor VIII situation. I have obviously known of the shortage for some time but not of the immediacy of the problem. Clearly the shortfall will have to be made up by commercial Factor VIII and the Scottish Home & Health Department are acting wisely in instructing the various Health Boards to secure a commercial supplier immediately. As there is a world wide shortage of Factor VIII one can only hope that the companies can meet our needs.

The purchasing of Factor VIII is going to have considerable financial implications. If we were to receive half our Factor VIII from the NHS and purchase the other half commercially it would cost our small unit £100,000 per annum. Since receiving your letter, I have talked with Gordon Lowe about the most appropriate use of Scottish Factor VIII. We both feel that children should be given priority as we are concerned about the risks of non-A, non-B hepatitis in patients receiving commercial Factor VIII. If the NHS supply is insufficient for all of the children, then I would elect to treat the non HIV positive boys with it and give the HIV positive boys commercial Factor VIII. It is a difficult decision to make because as you know, the viral safety of NHS Factor VIII is still in question. However, our HIV positive boys were all infected by commercial Factor VIII and I honestly do not believe that our parents would accept commercial Factor VIII despite what reassurances we may give them. Fortunately, Gordon (a good parent) supports me in this. Such a policy would save the Maternity and Paediatric Unit about £100,000 per annum, which will have to be borne by Glasgow Royal Infirmary and the Unit Manager there may well voice his objections. If you think this decision is unfair or feel it wrong for any reason, perhaps you could let me know.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

BRENDA GIBSON
CONSULTANT HAEMATOLOGIST

cc Mr Haynes Unit Manager RHSC Yorkhill
Mr H Miller Principal Pharmacist RHSC Yorkhill