

REVISED DRAFT PRESS NOTICE (AEB) - 19 December 1984

AIDS

All Scottish Factor VIII, the blood product used to treat haemophiliacs, is now being heat treated to counter HTLV III, the virus that can cause AIDS. This move by the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service, who supply Factor VIII for the NHS, follows recent evidence that some Scottish haemophiliac patients have developed antibodies to HTLV III, raising the possibility that a pool of plasma used to prepare Factor VIII contained blood from a donor who had been exposed to the virus. Every effort is being made to trace the source.

The transfusion service has renewed its request that donors in groups known to have an above average risk of contracting AIDS should not give blood because of the risk of transmitting the virus. A revised leaflet explaining this is being issued to all blood donors, who are being asked to sign a statement that they have read the leaflet and are not in one of the risk groups.

Doctors at Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary stressed that although some haemophilia patients treated with Factor VIII develop HTLV III antibodies this certainly does not mean that they have AIDS, or even that they will necessarily go on to get the disease. The problem is much smaller than in most other countries, because in recent years Scotland has had to import very little commercially produced Factor VIII which carries a greater risk of transmitting AIDS.