

Mr Davies

# ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)

As we discussed, the background note which DHSS sent to No 10 reflects the situation in England and Wales. As a point of nitpicking detail the words "Communicable Disease Centre at Atlanta....." in paragraph 1 should read "Centres for Disease Control (CDC) Atlanta....." CDC in their Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) dated March 4 1983 has an article on the prevention of AIDS which includes the recommendations of various Agencies such as the American Haemophilia Society. I attach a copy for your interest and which you may include in your submission if you so wish. It is to be noted of course that these recommendations are made in the light of the conditions in the USA.

The DHSS submission on page 2 refers to "UK Blood Transfusion Directors" While the Scottish Directors, in particular Dr McClelland have been in touch with Dr Gunson who is the DHSS consultant adviser in Blood Transfusion there have been no formal discussions with England and Wales Directors as the submission suggests. With regard to paragraph 2 under heading "What Action are we taking" it should be noted that the European Office of WHO are also collecting information about AIDS - copy of recent telex attached.

Dr Prentice is in close contact with the Communicable Diseases (Scotland) Unit at Ruchill to which any case of AIDS arising in Scotland would be notified. So far no proven case has been notified. It is perhaps worth noting that the signs and symptoms of this disease are somewhat vague and no specific diagnostic test is available; moreover it will be important to ensure that all countries notifying cases to WHO are applying the same diagnostic criteria.

As you are aware nearly all blood products including factor VIII used in Scotland are produced at the PFC from blood voluntarily donated within Scotland. There are a few patients who are currently being treated with imported factor VIII but I understand the use of this product is limited to these few patients.

The Blood Transfusion Directors in Scotland are very aware of <sup>the</sup> ~~this~~ problem and have it under constant consideration. They are currently considering -

- (a) Briefing all front line blood bank staff to handle questions from donors.
- (b) Preparing a ~~neutral~~ <sup>type</sup> of factual leaflet about AIDS and making this available at donor sessions - perhaps drawing attention to it as a follow-up to recent press and television publicity.
- (c) Informal contact with representatives of the relevant gay associations.
- (d) Avoiding collection in high risk locations such as prisons or where there is known to be a high proportion of homosexuals or drug abuse ~~in~~ in the population.

While these points are currently under consideration it is felt that the situation does not warrant action until the risks have been more fully evaluated; paragraph (a) is however in hand.

GRO-C

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