

1) Professor Sedson R. 28
 2) D. Maycock

HEALTH EXPERTS' WARNING

Danger of Jaundice in Blood Transfusions

"Daily Telegraph" and "The Scotsman"
Correspondent

GENEVA, Wednesday.—A warning against the indiscriminate use of blood transfusions was issued here to-night by the World Health Organisation of the United Nations.

A group of experts convened by the organisation reported that transfusions can be extremely dangerous as a means of transmitting serum hepatitis, a form of jaundice, a virulent disease whose mortality averages one or two per thousand.

The use of transfusions is increasing in all countries for the treatment of wounds, burns, and even among children, of measles. That it involves considerable risk is proved by the fact that in Britain in 1949 out of ten children exposed to measles and preventively treated with dried blood plasma, seven contracted jaundice and three died.

The experts recommend that "no person should be accepted as a blood donor if at any time of his life he has suffered from jaundice." They make an exception for cases of life-saving emergency or a single transfusion.

They estimate that this rule may reduce by five to ten per cent. the number of donors, but hold that this would be unimportant "if non-essential transfusions—of which far too many are taking place every day—were not performed."

From statistics gathered after transfusions about one person in 200 was found to be a carrier of jaundice, the experts said.

DRIED PLASMA

They also recommend that dried plasma should be prepared from small pools of from ten to 20 donors—as now practised in Britain—since one single infected blood can infect the whole pool.

Serum hepatitis can be transmitted not only by transfusions but also by accidental inoculation with infected needles, syringes, and other instruments. The risk is present in innumerable medical, surgical, and dental procedures and even in tattooing and shaving. Ordinary methods of sterilisation are ineffective. The experts recommend special measures for mass immunisation campaigns.

The only specific preventive of jaundice is gamma globulin which, though a blood product, involves a negligible risk of transmitting serum hepatitis. It is also used for prophylactic treatment of measles and, experimentally, of infantile paralysis.