Your reference
Our reference

D K Nichol Esq
Regional General Manager
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Dear Mr Nichol

SUPPLY OF PLASMA TO THE BLOOD PRODUCTS LABORATORY

I am sorry not to have replied earlier to your letter of 19 December.

It is encouraging in the face of the AIDS problem to receive such a constructive response.  I confirm that both points 1 and 2 of your letter are correct.  When plasma procurement targets were set for all Regions in 1981 they were determined on a pro-rata basis per population of catchment areas, and were designed to progressively build up a store of plasma at BPL Elstree which would peak in 1986. The significant increase in their capacity when the new laboratory was "on-stream" would thereby be matched by supply of plasma.

In 1981 the need to heat-treat Factor VIII to kill HTLV III virus could not of course have been anticipated.  There is still some doubt as to the extent to which a loss of yield is inherent in heat treatment.  However it is prudent to build in a safety margin on the lines you suggest.  When we have more certain information about the heat-treatment process adopted by BPL and its effect on the yield from plasma I shall let you know.

In conversation with Mr Fursdon I mentioned that we had received one or two suggestions for altering the organisational and financial basis of the BTS in order to cope with some of the problems which were being encountered in the drive to self sufficiency.  These included cross charging between RHAs and BPL for plasma supplied and vice versa for finished products.  There is a pilot project in operation in Wessex.  However whilst such ideas are being discussed we hope that they will not affect the commitment of Regions to the goal of self sufficiency which the AIDS problem has made more vital than ever.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

M A HARRIS

Copy to MR WILLIAMS WITH FILE