

Comments PS(PH -

Lords Starred Oral- PQ01574 For Answer on 13 January 2003

Lord Morris of Manchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what new help they are considering for people infected with hepatitis C by contaminated National Health Service blood products, and for the dependants of those who have since died as a result of their infection.

Suggested Answer:

We have enormous sympathy with those affected by this tragedy. ~~There are no new initiatives planned specifically for these individuals.~~ However, A strategy to achieve effective prevention, testing and treatment services for all hepatitis C sufferers has been published ~~for consultation~~. An action plan to implement this strategy will be produced in the next few months.

We should say that it happened at a time when tests were not available.

Why is pegylated interferon recommended in Scotland for hepatitis C treatment but not in England?

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence is considering pegylated interferon and expects to issue guidance in November 2003. In the meantime, NHS bodies should continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where there is no guidance from NICE at the time the technology first becomes available, including assessing available evidence.

✓ Cost.

Government Strategy on Hepatitis C

Consultation on the Government's *Hepatitis C Strategy for England* closed on 15 November 2002. The key messages of the strategy are to:-

- Raise professional and public awareness of hepatitis C;
- Intensify prevention activities to minimise new infections;
- Increase diagnosis of individuals infected with hepatitis C;
- Assess those infected and offer treatment (where indicated);
- Improve epidemiological surveillance and research.

Delivery

The strategy will form the basis of an action plan as proposed in the Chief Medical Officer's infectious disease strategy *Getting Ahead of the Curve*.

The action plan, to be published in the next few months, will set out a clear framework for actions by Government, the NHS and others.

Funding of the strategy

- The major component has been included in general NHS allocations to support the NICE recommendations on combination therapy.
- Central funding of £1.3 million over two years (2002/03 and 2003/04) for raising awareness and improving surveillance. Funding for future years dependent on decision about SR2002.
- Voluntary sector funding for hepatitis C projects currently stands at around £0.2 million for 2002/03.
- HIV prevention funding (now in general allocations) includes health promotion for injecting drug users, and is also relevant for hepatitis C.
- The Department also has a central budget for drug misuse, for the National Treatment Agency of £175.7 million for 2002/03

PSLRois

09/01/2003 16:13

To: Charles Lister/PH6/DOH/GB@[GRO-C]Gerry

Robb/PH6/DOH/GB@[GRO-C] Zubeda Seedat/PH1/DOH/GB@[GRO-C]

cc:

Subject: Lords PQ - Monday

Thanks for sending over the new briefing pack.

Grateful if you could come over to room 418 in Richmond Hse on Monday at 13.30. PS(L) will probably want another short briefing meeting in the Lords prior to answering the PQ. Please let me know who will be in attendance so that I can order passes.

Thanks again

David

[Hugh Nicholas]

PSLRois

09/01/2003 11:05

To: Charles Lister/PH6/DOH/GB@GRO-C Gerry

Robb/PH6/DOH/GB@GRO-C Zubeda Seedat/PH1/DOH/GB@GRO-C

cc:

Subject: HCV/Contaminated blood products PQ

Charles/Gerry/Zubeda, thanks for attending the briefing meeting earlier this morning. I just thought i'd give a short list of the areas where PS(L) asked for a line or for the Q&A to be strengthened.

PS(L) asked for additional lines on -

- Compensation for accidental infection - especially for dependents and covering the apparent disparity in awards
- The previous question asked by Lord Ackner(?) on compensation (you have the actual text from Hansard)
- Screening of staff
- Social security aspect - comparison with any future Scottish system; are we likely to be pressured to follow suit?
- A ball park figure for the potential cost of compensation in England for those contaminated by the NHS
- More details of the Haemophilia Alliance's estimate of compensation and a line to take
- Ownership of the LRI
- Long term sustainability of plasma products in the UK and increase in the UKs recombinant production

Also, grateful if you could update/revise the old briefing and return the folder later today (Gerry if you need any assistance with this, let me know and I'll see what I can do!). PS(L) especially asked for the statistics, key facts and bit on access to Haemophilia Centres to be strengthened. Also, Gerry, could you add the bit in the first bullet point on NICE/Peg Interferon to the page (no. 49) PS(L) put in the folder. I'll arrange a meeting for Monday...

Many thanks

David Reay
locum PS(L)s office

GRO-C