GRO-C
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14th April
2008

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Dear Mr Grayson,

I found my original letter to the Department of Health concerning the withdrawal of American imported factor VIII. Enclosed is a copy for your records.

I would like to give Joe Sun another little shock by sending it to him. Can you please remind me of the Commissioner he chained who turned down or ignored my warning. Also can you give me his address which I think you may have in your files.

Very best wishes

GRO-C

Proposed withdrawal of USA factor VIII in UK in May 1983.

CAS

NSG/MHC

Dr. Ian Field
Dept. of Health & Social Security
Alexander Fleming House
Elephant & Castle
London SE1 6BY

9th May, 1983

Dear Ian,

Action on AIDS

Last week whilst you were away in Geneva a case of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in a haemophiliac in Cardiff who had received USA facter VIII concentrate was reported. The case fits the recognised criteria for the diagnosis of AIDS. In the Lancet of 30th April three cases in haemophiliacs in Spain are reported; I have confirmed that they received USA factor VIII concentrate. In the same issue of the Lancet the tallyoof 11 reported cases in haemophiliacs in the USA is recorded and a paper describes a case in a multiply-transfused child in the USA.

I have reviewed the literature and come to the conclusion that all blood products made from blood donated in the USA after 1978 should be withdrawn from use until the risk of AIDS transmission by these products has been clarified. Appended is a paper in which I set out my reasons for making this proposal. Perhaps the subject could be discussed at an early meeting with haematologists, virologists and others concerned so that a decision may be made as soon as possible.

In conclusion may I say that I am most surprised that the USA manufacturers of the implicated blood products have not informed their customers of this new hazard. I assume no official warning has been received in the United Kingdom?

Kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

N.S. Galbraith

ACTION ON AIDS

The temporary withdrawal of all blood products imported from the United States of America made from blood donated after 1978 is proposed, until the risk of transmission of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) becomes clarified.

REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF USA BLOOD PRODUCTS

1. The AIDS epidemic in the USA is probably due to a transmissible agent.[1]
2. The agent is probably transmitted by blood and blood products. In the Lancet of 30th April, 11 cases of AIDS in haemophiliacs in the USA receiving factor VIII concentrate were reported[2], 3 in Spain[3] also receiving USA factor VIII concentrate (confirmed by telephoning Ministry of Health, Madrid) and a case in a child following multiple transfusions is described[4]. (one of the blood donors to this case developed AIDS 7 months after donating blood and died of the disease 10 months later). On 1st May the 'Mail on Sunday' reported 2 cases in haemophiliacs in the UK; one of these, Professor Bloom's case in Cardiff, fits the accepted criteria of AIDS and had received USA factor VIII concentrate; we have not yet been able to identify the other possible case.
3. Although this number of cases of AIDS associated with the administration of factor VIII concentrate is very small in relation to the number of individuals receiving the product, this may NOT indicate that the risk is small because (a) the earliest cases of AIDS reported in the USA developed symptoms in 1978[5] and, therefore, USA blood products manufactured from donations before 1978 are very unlikely to have been contaminated. Indeed, the earliest reported date of onset of AIDS in a haemophiliac is October 1980[6]. (b) Most of the reported cases of AIDS have been diagnosed in 1981 and 1982. In 1981 and the first six months of 1982 456 cases were reported out of 506 since January

1979, 249 of them in 1982[7]. (c) the incubation period is long, between several months and two years and may be as long as four years[9] and therefore one would not expect to see many cases due to USA blood products until a year or more after 1981/82 donated blood products had been given.

4. Factor VIII concentrate (and pooled products) would appear to have a high risk of being contaminated with AIDS agent because homosexuals and drug abusers are known to be frequent blood donors and each plasma pool from which it is manufactured is collected from as many as 1,000 donors[6]. Furthermore, it is possible that the AIDS agent may be present in blood of healthy persons for several months before onset of symptoms.[4]

5. There is apparently no known means of ensuring that blood or blood products are free of the AIDS agent. The blood given to a multiply-transfused infant who developed AIDS had been irradiated before administration[4] suggests the possibility of an agent resistant to usual means of sterilisation.

6. The mortality rate of AIDS exceeds 60 per cent one year after diagnosis[8] and is expected to reach 70 per cent.[1]

References

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5. CDC. (1982) Update on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections in Previously Healthy Persons - United States. Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report, 31, 294-301.

6. CDC (1982) Pneumocystis carinii Pneumonia among Persons with Hemophilia A. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 31, 365-7.

7. CDC (1982) Update on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) - United States. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 31, 507-14.

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9. BRUNET JB, BOUVET E, LEIBOWITCH J et al (1983) Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome in France. Lancet, 1, 700-1.

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