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1st December 1986

Dr Alison Smithies, DHSS.  
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Dear Alison

When I returned from our meeting on the 27th of November I spoke to John Barbara. I was disappointed that the working Party on Transfusion Associated Hepatitis had apparently unanimously agreed that a recipient follow-up study in Britain was economically a 'non-starter'.

However, John Barbara took it for granted that the meeting was referring to the often mooted idea of a British duplication of the full prospective American Transfusion Transmitted Virus study. He naturally was not at all surprised that this was formally rejected since he had been party to similar discussions at previous Working Party meetings. He felt though that this had in no way precluded some form of specific prospective follow-up of recipients of the actual "positive" units together with limited controls. He also assumed (since the Edgware/Bristol application had been mentioned at the meeting) that the proposed future meeting at Manchester with Jack Gillon (Edinburgh B.T.C.) to discuss 'protocols' would be open to such considerations.

Obviously we realise the enormous cost of following up a cohort of recipients of all transfused units but at Edgware we feel it would be pointless merely to assess the anti-HBC and elevated ALT rates in donors. This is simply a first (albeit important) step towards providing hard data for replying to the question:- "Should the UK be performing surrogate screen tests for NANB hepatitis?". Finding "positive" rates without having any idea of whether these positives actually transmit NANB hepatitis in the UK will provide no defence against "panic" requests to start surrogate screening. Because we at Edgware have discussed this in some detail over the past few years I think John may have assumed that this was a commonly held view and was therefore somewhat reticent to press an "obvious" point.

~~NLN/~~ 8597

I thought I would just mention this to you so that you were aware that we are still keen on some form of recipient study along the lines already submitted.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Dr Marcela Contreras  
DIRECTOR

~~NLN/ 8598~~