

BLOOD PRODUCTS: SCREENING

Lord Irving of Dartford asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will confirm that all plasma derived products, particularly Factor VIII and Factor IX concentrates, which are currently being distributed from blood products laboratories and commercial companies have been individually donor-screened for anti HIV; and

Whether they will state the dates from which distributed products have been manufactured from donor-screened anti HIV plasma, both in the commercial market and in British products manufactured at blood products laboratories.

Baroness Trumpington: It is necessary to distinguish Factor VIII and Factor IX from other plasma derived products, as these are the only ones for which Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) transmission has been established.

Factor VIII and Factor IX are made by the Blood Products Laboratory (BPL) at Elstree for distribution in England and Wales, and by the Protein Fractionation Centre (PFC) in Edinburgh for distribution in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In addition, commercial Factor VIII is imported for distribution in England and Wales. No commercial Factor IX products are licensed for marketing in the United Kingdom. All Factor VIII and Factor IX manufactured or used in the United Kingdom is heat treated to inactivate HIV.

By the end of 1985 all licensed commercially manufactured Factor VIII released in the United Kingdom was made from individually donor-screened plasma. The heat treatment used by the BPL is more rigorous than that used in commercial processes. The BPL product has a good record of safety in clinical trials and has been shown to be safe when made from screened and unscreened plasma. All plasma processed at BPL since 2nd June 1986 has been derived from individually screened donations.

Products derived from screened plasma will become available from BPL for distribution in England and Wales during August 1986. By December 1986 all issued products will be derived from donor-screened plasma. All plasma processed at PFC since January 1986 has been derived from individually screened donations. By the end of August 1986, all products distributed by PFC in Scotland and Northern Ireland will be derived from donor-screened plasma.

PROHIBITION OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION
ACT 1985: IMPLEMENTATION

Baroness Jeger asked Her Majesty's Government:

What action has been taken to implement the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985; and how many prosecutions have been brought under this legislation.

Baroness Trumpington: The Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 came into force on 16th September 1985. Information on court proceedings for 1985 is not yet available. The Government have agreed grants totalling £86,000 to voluntary organisations to fund schemes to promote an information and education campaign about the implications of the Act and the potentially adverse effects on health of the practice of female circumcision.

EXERCISE BRAVE DEFENDER

The Earl of Bessborough asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether they will make a further statement about exercise Brave Defender?

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Lord Trefgarne): I informed your Lordships last October that I was placing in the Library an unclassified initial assessment of Exercise Brave Defender. This gave our initial judgment that the exercise had been an overall success and in particular demonstrated that the revised military home defence concept for guarding vital installations worked in practice.

The exercise was not designed to test our total military home defence capability nor could it realistically simulate wartime conditions in the nation as a whole. Nevertheless, further detailed analysis has confirmed our first impressions. We were particularly pleased with the co-operation between all three services, the integration of US forces and the participation of the reserves on such a large scale. The participation of civilian police forces nationwide was particularly useful since it underlined the fact that the primary responsibility for the internal security of the United Kingdom rests with the police. Following the exercise, studies are under way into improvements to mobilisation procedures; refinements in the deployment of static and mobile guard forces in the defence of vital installations; and the training and equipment available for Home Defence Forces.

We intend to build on the foundation of Brave Defender by conducting further military home defence exercises on both a local and national scale, although no date has yet been fixed for any future national exercise.

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