

# AIDS scare gays told: Don't give blood

HOMOSEXUALS in the Midlands are being warned that they must stop being regular blood donors because of the risk of passing on a killer disease.

Leaflets just issued to all donors at West Midland transfusion centres say that sexual activities of promiscuous homosexual men could lead them to pass on AIDS — Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome — which destroys the body's ability to fight off infection.

Already a number of homosexuals have decided not to give blood, said Dr. Fereydoun Ala, director of the West Midlands Regional Blood Transfusion Service, the first in the country to issue a warning.

"We do not know how many homosexuals have stopped being blood donors," he added. "We would not question someone who reads the leaflet and then walks out of a transfusion centre."

"The risk is extremely small but we are taking it very seriously."

Following Dr. Ala's initiative, directors of British transfusion centres have got together with Department of Health officials to produce a leaflet which will be made available to all donors.

It is now being printed and should be available in the next two or three weeks.

## Donors

Before the West Midland leaflet was produced, Dr. Ala said they had had consultations with gay associations who had been "most concerned" about the risk of passing on AIDS.

It has been established that those in most jeopardy are promiscuous homosexuals, bisexual men, intravenous drug abusers, immigrants from Haiti and haemophiliacs.

The problem confronting the blood transfusion centres has been how to avoid the spread of AIDS which cannot be detected by screening without causing offence to their donors.

Many nurses would be reluctant to ask volunteer donors about their sexual practices and it was felt that questionnaires would be offensive.

(2707)

*Miss Owens*  
As below, please  
Miss Williams GRO-C 11/8

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GRO-C: SRS 9.8.83