

Ref: HarisB9f

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From: Dr H Pickles
Med SEB/B

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Copy: Dr Moore ✓
Mr Lister

VIROLOGICAL SAFETY OF BLOOD FOR TRANSFUSION

1. (At EAGA on Tuesday CMO charged you with looking into how advice should be sought concerning retroviral contamination of blood and the formation of policy in this area. Since EAGA is concerned only with HIV1 and 2, some other body is needed.

2. We need to bring together the following:

- virologists, epidemiologists and experts on testing techniques
- people from the NBTS
- Richard Lane or other representative of Elstree
- cross representation with EAGA
- cross representation with biological subcommittee CSM
- internal colleagues concerned with policy including finance

Ideally, the chairman should be the DCMO with responsibility for both Medicines Division and the NBTS/CBLA (ie you!): an alternative might be the new director of our national transfusion service (when we have one). To avoid the creation of a new body, we could resuscitate the advisory committee on the NBTS.

3. Suitable topics for discussion would be:

- * Hepatitis B - no problems here as far as I know, but the situation needs to be kept under review.
- * HIV1 Screening- will there be a place for antigen testing (as occurs now in parts of Germany)? Antibody technology is changing fast too.
- * Non A Non B - can we resist pressures (eg from FDA and some pharmaceutical manufacturers and perhaps even

the EC) for A.L.T. testing? If the EC/CSM make such a recommendation (and Dr Lane would back them), Would the resources be found and would Ministers be prepared for the knock-on effect on donors and plasma supply? At some stage there may be a more specific test - as mentioned in last week's Nature.

- * HTLV1 - there are pressures to introduce screening for this. The benefits are uncertain and the resources considerable.
- * CJD - although there is no test for the infectious agent, it would be feasible to exclude at least those who have received human growth hormone. This was mentioned in Monday's "Independent".
- * CMV - only some products are tested currently when specifically requested
- * New Agents - discoveries are being made rapidly in this area

4. If you are content that we explore these possibilities further, I could draw up possible terms of reference and suggestions for members and draft a note for you to send to CMO.

GRO-C

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