

Email from Hugh Nicholas to Linda Page dated 8 August 2006

Thanks for sight of the 'Project Description'. I would like to offer a few comments.

Firstly, I cannot claim any expertise in haematology (my interests are specifically in hepatitis C) so additionally you may wish to consider including someone with knowledge of blood. The project description speaks of a member of staff in post "at the time". I can't think of anyone left (given that you are talking of over 20 years ago). I was not even in DH then.

I note a decision has been taken to cover the period 1970 to 1985 (i.e. four years before hepatitis C was identified and 6 years before the introduction of donor screening). I assume therefore that the project is only concerned with the viral inactivation of blood products, and not the wider issue of the safety of blood. The introduction of anti-HCV testing would have significantly reduced the risk of large plasma pools being contaminated with hepatitis C, thus placing less reliance upon successful heat treatment.

Even if you keep to the narrower remit, I am not sure that you should stop at 1985. In the preceding years, various unsuccessful attempts had been made to produce plasma products inactivated against HIV and NANBH (the latter being the more difficult to achieve). Without tests for NANBH, my limited understanding is that these products could only be tested in practice (i.e. did people receiving these products actually get hepatitis). I am not sure that anyone knew that 8Y heat treated factor VIII would be so successful at the time it was introduced and believe that follow up studies showing that it was in fact safe were only published later. These (and any similar work) should be included for completeness.

Happy to discuss.

Hugh

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