

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 1996WRITTENHOUSE OF COMMONS

MR PHIL SALLIE (AYA)

«Name» («Constituency»): To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what consideration has been given to the use of synthetic Factor VIII for the treatment of haemophilia and if he will make a statement.

(«Number»)

37122

**Michael Forsyth:**

Synthetic, or recombinant, Factor VIII is a new treatment considered appropriate for some patients with haemophilia. The treatment is an alternative to the plasma derived Factor VIII currently in use and supplied free of charge to the NHS by the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service. To assist with the costs involved in the acquisition of the new product, which is only available from commercial sources, I have agreed to make available funding of £1.1 million in the current year. Future arrangements will depend on the speed and extent of the transition from plasma derived Factor VIII to recombinant. This will be kept under review.

PQ 10/7/96

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THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

CMA05407

**Background Note (not for Hansard)**

1. Haemophiliacs lack a natural clotting factor normally found in blood and may bleed spontaneously or after minor injuries. This painful and debilitating condition can be relieved by the use of Factor VIII (FVIII), which is extracted from the plasma contained in blood donations. A new type of Factor VIII (Recombinant factor VIII) not produced from blood is now available. The Directors of Haemophilia Centres consider this synthetic Factor VIII a more appropriate therapy for some groups of patients and may extend its use further if it is shown to be as effective as the plasma-derived Factor VIII.

2. In Scotland, Factor VIII is supplied free of charge to haemophilia treatment centres by the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS). The transition from plasma-derived Factor VIII to the commercial synthetic product is likely to take a number of years. In the interim, the Secretary of State has agreed to subsidise the additional costs involved which are £1.1 million in the current year.

3. This does not mean that there is any less need for blood donors. Factor VIII is just one of a wide range of life saving products manufactured from blood given by Scotland's generous volunteer donors. Scotland continues to need 1,000 donors every day.

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The Scottish Office Department of Health  
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