

Dr Mary Ramsay
Health Protection Agency
61 Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5EQ

11th October 2006

Dear Dr Ramsay

Re: Skipton Fund Appeal Panel

Please find enclosed a copy of the Skipton Fund scheme guidelines explaining what we are and how we work.

The Skipton Fund Independent Appeal Panel has recently been established and the Panel are seeking further information regarding IV drug use and the transmission of the hepatitis C virus. I am writing at the suggestion of Dr Patricia Hewitt who is a member of the Skipton Fund Appeal Panel. At its first meeting the Panel saw a number of cases where a short (or even one-off) use of IV drugs was an alternative cause of infection to blood transfusion.

The Panel had a copy of Hepatitis C Strategy for England August 2002 DH. Figure 2 on page 12 suggests that drug injectors for 0 to 2 years have a prevalence of infection with HCV of approximately 10%.

Could you please give us your expert opinion on the question whether there is any epidemiological or other evidence that might allow the Panel to be more precise in its quantification of the chance that IV drug use over time up to 2 years has been the cause of the HCV infection?

Clearly the risk before the first injection is zero but is the increase in risk linear over time up to 2 years' use or are there other considerations or, indeed, is it simply not possible to say? The Panel works on the standard of the balance of probability when deciding appeals.

We would be extremely grateful to hear from you as soon as possible and naturally we would be happy to reimburse you for your time if you enclose an invoice with your response.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Fish
Scheme Administrator

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