Dr C A Ludlam
Consultant Haematologist
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Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
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16th April 1998

Dear Dr Ludlam,

Re: Scottish blood products and transmission of hepatitis C

I am writing following a telephone conversation with a Scottish member who contracted hepatitis C from his haemophilia treatment. He was first treated in 1986, and the product that was used was called "Mark II NY".

Up until I spoke this member I understood that from the end of 1985 all haemophilia blood products were virally inactivated using procedures which, although primarily designed to kill the HIV virus, also killed the HCV virus. Consequently, I have always believed that anyone first treated in or after 1986 was not at risk of contracting hepatitis C. The member concerned, however, tells me that Mark II NY, which I understand was the factor VIII product produced by the Scottish Blood Transfusion service and used widely in Scotland in 1986, although heat treated at 68 degrees for 24 hours, was still able to transmit HCV. He also said that it was not until 1987 when "Z8", another form of factor VIII manufactured by the SNBTS which underwent 'stronger' viral inactivation procedures, was introduced that a product became available which was 'safe' from hepatitis C.

Can you tell me any more about this? In particular, do you know what proportion of people in Scotland with haemophilia A were receiving Mark II NY during 1986, and when exactly "Z8" became available? Also, do you know of any other patients in Scotland who were first treated with clotting factor concentrates between the end of 1985, and before the introduction of "Z8". Did any other factor concentrates transmit HCV in 1986? Any information you have would be gratefully received! If you do not have access to this information, can you suggest who to approach to answer some of these questions?

I have also e-mailed Dr Cachia about some of these issues as I understand he has written a medical report for the patient concerned.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Best wishes

Lucy McGrath
Hepatitis Worker

Cc: Karin Pappenheim
Dr Cachia