



Dr. M CONTRERAS  
Director

# NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

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MC/cgf

3 May 1991

Dr. H. L. Lloyd  
Director/General Manager  
Northern Regional Health Authority  
Regional Blood Transfusion Centre  
Holland Drive  
Barrack Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4NQ.



Dear Hugh

## "GO IT ALONE" HEPATITIS C TESTING

I was very sad and disturbed to receive your letter of 2 May 1991 informing us that you have decided to start testing for anti-HCV by 1 July, because you are already set up for testing.

Your decision will erode the concept of a National Blood Transfusion Service. The majority of Regional Transfusion Directors have decided to start testing when the data on the current national comparative studies of the available tests are accessible to analysis.

With a national consensus approach, the threat of Product Liability should not arise. We think that under current legislation it would be defensible to postpone testing. Moreover a national approach might well have prompted the Department of Health to provide appropriate funding for testing with all its ramifications such as confirmatory assays, counselling and donor referral. Now, I can see no hope of presenting a united front in pursuit of central funding.

In taking such a potentially divisive step, do you have sufficient up to date information in your Region to justify your decision? How much NANB PTH caused by HCV is there in the Northern Region?

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If you were to read the Minutes of the National Management Committee Meeting and of the Advisory Committee on Transfusion Transmitted Diseases, you would be able to see that nobody in the U.K. is routinely testing for anti-HBc or ALT as surrogate markers for NANBH. With regards to such testing, our view has always been that this would be a waste of resources, especially with the imminent introduction of a specific assay for anti-HCV.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

7 Marcela Contreras  
Director

c.c. Dr. H. H. Gunson  
Prof. J. D. Cash  
Regional Transfusion Directors - U.K.

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