

GRO-C

4 February 1985

Professor R.M. Hardisty
Director, Haemophilia Centre
Gt. Ormond Street, W.C.1.

Dear Professor Hardisty,

I was distressed to read your response to my letter in the Guardian last week. My only purpose in writing the letter was to stir the complacency of the Government into producing the heat-treated Lister factor by April as per the information they have been handing out to the press. Needless to say, I had no intentions of causing distress to anyone.

However, I feel I must defend myself against the implication of your letter. As I wrote, it was just over four years ago that I broached the subject of AIDS, and since that time I spoke often and extensively to both Colin Sieff and Dr. O'Callaghan on the subject and neither of them, until the time of the programme of television, said they knew of the disease. My husband was present at several of these conversations so I know I wasn't imagining them. One of the very positive aspects we have found during the time we have been involved with GOS through Nicholas, has been the very high level of shared knowledge and support received from the doctors and nursing staff in the unit, and my statement in my letter that no-one I spoke to during this period knew of AIDS was true as I know it. If they knew it was not communicated to me. I was only looking for further assistance and information after receiving these scraps and articles from America.

The second point in your letter made me feel dreadful. My husband and I came to GOS two days after returning from America in January, to see Dr. Evans and Dr. Derbyshire to discuss the outcome of the general meeting that had been called whilst we were away. As I say above, both doctors were supportive, informative and answered our questions as fully as one could wish. It was our understanding that after much thought GOS had decided to switch to Armour heat treated factor which everyone seemed to feel was marginally safer. We asked if the children including Nicholas could briefly be on Armour treatment, but switch to English heat treated factor in April as we had both read that it would be available then. Both doctors said that only tiny amounts would be available in April and that it would not really come on stream until the end of the year, leaving about 10 months to use the American factor. It was right of them to say it, if it was so. However it is obvious from your letter the situation has already changed and that the Lister heat treated factor is now at the hospital and that the children can go onto it in April or at latest May - this takes an enormous burden off of us to think that the English heat treatment will be used so quickly.

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You have to understand that it was only my extreme concern at the newspapers being fobbed off by Government announcements that English heat treated factor would be available from April (Guardian leader article), that prompted me the day after hearing that it would not be available, to write the letter.

It was a shock therefore to read your letter and feel that we were in some way in opposition to each other instead of working together to get the maximum possible help out of Government bodies for the children.

With best wishes,

Della Hirsch

The letter was written under my sister-in law's name to avoid any possible link with Nicholas who knows nothing of course of these problems.