

HEPATITIS C TESTING

You will have seen or heard today's media statements about the possibility of introducing the newly developed test for antibody to Hepatitis C. This may prove to be an effective way of reducing the small risk of transmitting hepatitis through transfusion and it's therefore a matter of great importance for the Transfusion Service.

Preliminary tests show that in Britain about 0.5-0.8% of the population have antibody to Hepatitis C. Present knowledge suggests that the great majority of people with this antibody are entirely healthy although a very small proportion may develop liver conditions.

The new test is still undergoing extensive evaluation in many countries and in UK transfusion centres. It is unlikely to be licensed for use in the United States until the early months of 1990.

Dr D B L McClelland
24th August, 1989.