

3 April 1995



Dear Doctor

HEPATITIS C AND BLOOD TRANSFUSION LOOK BACK

I am sending this letter to inform you of the guidance and procedures for the look back exercise announced by Tom Sackville, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, on 11 January 1995, to trace, counsel and, if necessary, treat those people who may have been inadvertently infected with hepatitis C through blood transfusions.

Many of you will have received information in January 1995 about the Government's announcement of the look back exercise.

I am asking for your help in identifying those patients who may have been infected with hepatitis C through blood transfusion. This will concern primarily hospital consultants in a number of specialties, those working in blood transfusion centres, and general practitioners. I am sure that your patients will appreciate your efforts on their behalf.

An ad hoc Working Party of experts has now drawn up guidance on the procedures for undertaking the look back exercise and for counselling those identified as being at risk, as well as guidance on the treatment options available.

From the Chief Medical Officer

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PL CMO (95)1

Hepatitis C and Blood Transfusion Look Back

For action

- All Doctors
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For information

- Regional Directors\Managers
 - District General Managers
 - Chief Executives, NHS Trusts
 - General Managers FHSAs
 - General Managers DMUs
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For further information please
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The guidance and procedures are set out in the Annexes:

- * Guidance on the look back procedures - Annex A
- * Guidance on counselling and treatment options - Annex B

It is important that all testing to determine a patient's hepatitis C status is undertaken by diagnostic microbiology laboratories with the capability of performing polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for hepatitis C on site. A list of recommended laboratories will be provided by the National Blood Authority. Arrangements have been made for the National Blood Authority to bear the cost of such testing.

GRO-C

Dr Kenneth C Calman
Chief Medical Officer

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