

FREE PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

POST TRANSFUSION HEPATITIS WITHIN TRENT REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY 1988.

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Post Transfusion Hepatitis (PTH) continues to be a problem within the UK despite the introduction of sensitive assays for Hepatitis B Surface Antigen (HBsAg). Non A non B Hepatitis (NANB) is the predominant cause of PTH, although there is a continuing low incidence of transfusion transmitted hepatitis B.

During 1988 6 cases of suspected post transfusion hepatitis were reported to the Trent RTC, 5 involved hepatitis B and 1 NANB. Three cases were felt to be true transfusion transmitted disease (2 Hepatitis B, 1 NANB), the other 3 were shown to have a non transfusion aetiology. Donors involved in all 6 cases were tested for hepatitis B markers. In each of the 3 cases of transfusion transmitted disease one donor was positive for Hepatitis B core antibody (anti HBc). In contrast none of the donors in the 3 other cases had any serological evidence of Hepatitis B infection. Furthermore the 2 donors involved in Hepatitis B transmission gave a history of acute hepatitis 2-3 years prior to donating.

Transmission of Hepatitis B by transfusion of blood positive for anti HBC is well recognised. Also anti HBc is used in many countries as a surrogate test for the NANB carrier state. We believe that donors with a history of jaundice/hepatitis should be screened for anti HBc and excluded from donating if found positive. A possible role for universal testing for anti HBc will be proposed.