

(69)

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE INTRODUCTION OF A SCREENING TEST  
FOR HIV ANTIBODIES

1978 HTLVI was isolated/identified  
1980 The above was published  
1983  
12 May 83 First identification of AIDS and its association  
with HTLV.

} irrelevant

1984

September 84 First publication of leaflet on "AIDS and how it  
concerns blood donors.

23 April 84 US Statement announcing discovery of HTLV3  
testing. (HIV)

23 April 84 Background Note on AIDS virus.

14 June 84 Article on the development of US kits to test for  
HIV - "Nature" Vol 309.

25 June 84 Suggested meeting to discuss possibility of  
obtaining US Kits for use in the UK.

28 June 84 Letter from Dr Gunson to Dr Smithies:-  
NBTS Director, Chairman of MRC Committee on  
AIDS, Consultant Virologist at Middlesex  
Hospital, Consultant Immunologist at Bristol BTC  
and Director of NW Thames RBTC meet to discuss  
possibility of obtaining US test kits. Also  
agreed that the test should be regarded as a  
research project and that it should not become a  
routine screening test on blood donations without  
proper appraisal. A three stage plan was  
agreed to effect this.

June 84 US select 5 companies to produce the diagnostic  
blood test for HIV antibodies.

end of June 84 51 cases of AIDS identified in the UK (28 of  
these have died)

0 11 July 84 RTC Directors meet and agree:-  
a) urgent priority be given to setting up a group of experts to advise HAS and  
b) the need to seek legal guidance on the implications of screening tests for HIV and  
c) that the NBTS could forecast a screening test is likely to be available within the next two months or so for trial at the Edgware Centre and then at Bristol and Manchester.

1 27 July 84 DHSS group of experts set up to provide guidance to the Health Authorities on how to handle problems arising from the consequence of screening for HIV. Ministers informed.

1 31 July 84 DHSS officials agree that ministers should be kept informed of all plans and proposals re HIV screening and that extra funding for the tests be sought from Central Funds.

2 10 August 84 DHSS seek permission from US to use their antigen in order to enable more widespread testing in the UK.

3 31 August 84 Briefing for Lord Glenarthur

4 31 August 84 Guardian article

5 1 September 84 Lancet article.

6 19 October 84 New Scientist Article.

7 19 October 84 Laboratory at Middlesex Hospital completed and ready to start testing of kits.  
Forecast that by the beginning of November sufficient reagent will be available to begin testing blood donations at the North London Transfusion Centres.

8 25 October 84 CMO agrees that HIV testing is carried out on the basis that negativity is a pre-requisite for donation of blood or plasma.

9 22 November 84 MS(H) declines funding for AIDS test - ITV interview 22 November.

10 23 November 84 PQ reply on availability of screening tests.

21 28 November 84 It is anticipated that the UK would be able to meet demands Blood Products by the end of '86 providing enough plasma could be collected and the new BP lab was completed.

2 4 December 84

PQ written answer about

- a) Government financial support to be given support to be given through MRC.
- b) Revision of leaflet - "AIDS and how it concerns blood donors."
- c) Strengthened efforts to dissuade people from donating blood if they are at high risk of transmitting AIDS virus.
- d) RTCs to be asked to ensure leaflet is given to every single donor within the NBTS.

1985

- 5 11 January 85 Submission to Ministers asking for agreement in principle to introduce the HIV blood test.
- 4 29 January 85 EAGA (Expert advisory group on AIDS) 1st Meeting - Screening Test Sub-Committee formed.
- January 85 HC(85)3 revised leaflet on "AIDS - important new advice for blood donors.
- 6 13 February 85 Initial evaluation of HIV tests conclude that a comparative evaluation must be carried out among representative groups of UK donors before the introduction of any present commercially available screening tests.
- 7 15 February 85 EAGA Screening Test Sub Group meet to discuss the update on availability and the timetable on the introduction of the screening tests.
- 3 18 February 85 RTC Directors meet. Proposed that VRL (Viral Reference Laboratory) at CPHL (Central Public Health Laboratories) at Colindale conduct an initial evaluation of the diagnostic kits. Field trials to follow on kits which pass the first evaluation (NBTS to do).
- 1 1 March 85 EAGA Screening Test Sub Group meet to discuss details of how the testing of the kits will take place.
- 18 March 85 Discussion in the House of Lords on HIV screening. (Oral PQ 3465/84/85)

31 28 March 85 EAGA Screening Test Sub Group meet to further discuss the progress of the testing of the kits and the repercussions of HIV screening once implemented.

2 April 85 Report on the introduction of a HIV test.

16 April 85 EAGA Screening Test Subgroup meet.

16 April 85 PQ oral answer on availability of tests.

5 10 June 85 EAGA Screening Test Subgroup meet to discuss:  
a) Progress on evaluation of kits  
b) RTC Directors proposals for informing donors  
c) Draft paper on how to inform doctors about the introduction of screening tests.  
d) Follow-up of earlier positive donations.

6 27 June 85 Press Release to announce the introduction within the next few months of the HIV screening test.

11 July 85 Report from the Working Party of RTC Directors meeting on 10 June 1985.

8 30 July 85 Letter to RGMS asking them to provide testing facilities outside the BTS.

9 30 July 85 CMO to SofS on AIDS and the treatment of haemophiliacs.

0 1 August 85 Press release on the above.

1 1 August 85 Letter to RGMS, DGMS, GMS, PG Teaching Hospitals, RSCOs, RSOs, RMOs DMOs and RTC Directors informing them of the outcome of the tests on kits.

2 1 August 85 Letter to RTC Directors with action to be taken to introduce HIV testing from 14 November 1985

3 8 August 85 New Scientist article accusing Ministers of delaying the launch of the HIV test.

4 16 August 85 Briefing for PS(H) on the above 'misinformed' article.

5 22 August 85 Letter to RTC Directors asking for details of progress being made in preparing for the introduction of HIV screening tests on 14 October 1985.

6 23 August 85 Press release announcing that HIV testing will begin at all RTCs on 14 October 1985.

7 27 August 85 Discussions begin on how best to publicise the introduction of screening (Alan Williams and Dr Smithies).

8 28 August 85 Baroness Trumpington to PS(H) asking to be kept informed about the introduction of HIV screening.

9 29 August 85 Letter to RTC Directors asking for confirmation that HIV screening will begin from 14 October 1985.

0 5 September 85 Response from Dr Smithies to the above.

1 22 September 85 BBC TV "This week - next week". Interview with David Dimbleby, Norman Fowler and Dr P Jones.

2 24 September 85 Letter to RGMS and GMS of SHAs and Post Graduate Teaching Hospitals on the "AIDS leaflet for Blood Donors".

3 25 September 85 Ad Hoc Working Group on the evaluation of the HIV screening test kits, meet to discuss further the manufacturers/kits to be used.

4 27 September 85 Letter to all RTC Directors from Alan Williams.

5 1 October 85 MS(H) meets with Mr R A Schoellhorn, Chairman of Abbott Laboratories Inc.

14 October 85 HIV screening begins in all RTCs.

25 October 85 Letter from Dr Smithies to RTC Directors about pre 14 October 1985 supplies of blood and blood products.

7 1 November 85 Letter from Barney Heyhoe MS(H) to Mr Schoellhorn further to correspondence at [October].

#### 1986

8 11 February 86 Press release on the first results of the HIV tests.

7 March 86 STB/86/4 Evaluation Report of 10 HIV assay kits.

18 March 86 Letter from Sir Philip de Zulueta to Barney Heyhoe MS(H).

61 17 April 86 Letter from Barney Heyhoe MS(H) to Sir Philip de Zulueta (PO(3) 5490/29 ) in response to his letter above.

62 5 June 86 EAGA Screening test Sub Group meet.