

Agenda Item 10

ENCLOSURE 12

NORTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

Manufacture of blood products

Report of the Regional Medical Officer

1. As a principal commitment the Blood Transfusion Service is expected to collect and supply blood, as a vital, life support facility: increasingly over the years it has become apparent that use of components - rather than blood in its whole form - is indicated in various conditions, and this report is prepared in the latter connection.
2. Fractionation of blood, to release its components, involves activity at a national Blood Products Laboratory located in the southern part of the country to which blood plasma (in frozen form) is sent from each Blood Transfusion Centre as the source of the products in question. Some few years ago it became apparent that the Blood Products Laboratory was in need of considerable capital upgrading - at an inordinate cost - and after much central deliberation it was decided that the upgrading should go ahead with the aim of eventual production capacity increased to a point that self sufficiency within the N.H.S. would be achieved and purchase of blood products from outside sources would be required no longer.
3. It will be apparent that an essential step in the process is a sufficient supply of the necessary 'raw material' (blood plasma), and 'procurement targets' have been set for each Region with 1988 as the year for their achievement.
4. In the case of the Northern Region whereas there has been steady progress towards the target set by the DHSS, there is a marked shortfall (some 9000 Kg of plasma were sent to the Blood Products Laboratory in 1983, against the expressed target of some 28000 Kg) in the expected contribution to the national scene.
5. The new Blood Transfusion Centre under development in Newcastle is expected to become operational in October 1985 but whilst it will provide much needed accommodation which inter alia will facilitate plasma production, it is not seen in itself as providing the means for securing the stated objective concerning supply of plasma for central processing. Inevitably, to boost plasma retrieval to within sight of the target level set for the Region, there will be a need for enhanced resources (staff, equipment, finance) as well as a greater emphasis on the practice of plasmapheresis whereby donors are relieved on an individual basis of a considerable quantity of plasma whilst having the other components of their blood donation returned to them unsullied.

This figure of
£1 1/4m is made
up of £2m
capital + £3/4m
revenue.

6. To attempt to fulfill the Region's obligation in this connection it is believed that annual new expenditure of some one and a quarter million pounds will be required: the annual savings which could result by reason of self sufficiency of blood products supply within the N.H.S. are estimated at some £400,000. *Region*

7. There has been recent Departmental inquiry, to be answered before the end of the present month, seeking reassurance that plasma procurement within Regions has engaged the attention of Regional Health Authorities and that targets are believed to be safeguarded. The Authority is committed to the stated course of action, but it may wish to offer the Department a qualified assurance with regard to timing of intent pending further analysis by officers in conjunction with Dr. Collins, Director of the Blood Transfusion Centre.

M. SACKWOOD

RMO/EB
17.9.84