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Blood virus assurance

A PLEA to the public not to panic over speculation concerning possible links between the mystery disease AIDS and blood transfusions was made last night.

The director of the Welsh region of the National Blood Transfusion Service, Dr Anthony Napier, stressed that no links between the killer virus and blood transfusions had been proved.

"The disease certainly exists but there is no proof as to how it is transmitted. All the evidence so far is circumstantial and I feel there is a need for people receiving transfusions to be reassured that they are only one of tens of thousands of people who can expect to receive complication-free

Western Mail Reporter

treatment," he said.

AIDS — its full title is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome — is believed to have originated among America's gay community. It destroys the body's natural resistance to disease, leaving it vulnerable to repeated attacks from infections and cancers which can prove fatal.

At the weekend several national newspapers reported two men in hospital in Cardiff and London were understood to be suffering from the disease after routine transfusions for haemophilia.

A spokesman for the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff confirmed yesterday that a mild case had been diag-

nosed a few months ago. No further details were available.

Describing the newspapers who pointed the finger of suspicion at blood transfusions as "irresponsible," Dr Napier said the Cardiff patient would have been treated with a variety of blood products, including some from America.

But he added, "We have been aware of this disease for some time and it has not caught us unaware. Several medical papers have been published on the subject and we are being as vigilant as possible."

"It is important to remember that we do not take blood from anyone who is harbouring any sort of infective problem, and prospective donors are always asked about their medical history," he said.

of debt to
£50m profit

BRITISH AIRWAYS, which last week nose-dived to an appalling loss of half a billion pounds, is expected to announce a spectacular turn-around to an operating profit of around £50m and a net profit of £50m for the next few months.

Much of last year's gloomy performance was due to redundancy and early settlement payments as the airline sought to trim its workforce to realistic levels.

When the unaudited results revealed tomorrow of the airline's recovery over the past year, it is likely that it will attribute its turn-around in part to reduced costs, the smaller workload and the cutting out of loss-making routes.

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