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SCOTTISH HOME AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

St Andrew's House Edinburgh EH1 3DE

PROTEIN FRACTIONATING Telephone 031-556 8501 ext

Received 27 APR 1987

TO ALL GENERAL MANAGERS 3-97

DR R. J. PERRY

COMMON SERVICES AGENCY

RECEIVED - 6 APR 1987

3 April 1987

DR PERRY

Dear General Manager

GRO-C

JOC RP BHEL

AIDS : SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF ZIDOVUDINE (RETROVIR : WELLCOME)

A new antiviral drug, Zidovudine, for the treatment of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS-related complex (ARC) has recently been granted a medicines product licence and will be made available by the Wellcome Foundation with effect from 1st April 1987.

Demand for Zidovudine is initially expected to exceed supply though Wellcome estimated that they have available sufficient drugs to treat all those patients who have had AIDS already diagnosed according to WHO criteria. While the terms of the product licence permit Zidovudine to be prescribed by any medical practitioner, in practice supplies will only initially be made available to hospitals where physicians have responsibility for the management of patients with serious clinical manifestations of AIDS. In this connection a senior medical officer in the Department has undertaken to liaise with the physicians concerned in an attempt to ensure that best use is made of the available supplies. A letter has been sent from the Department's Medical Division to Chief Administrative Medical Officers setting out the details (copy attached).

Zidovudine is not a cure for AIDS and treatment has to be continued for as long as the physician considers appropriate. Zidovudine will, however be the only drug available for the treatment of AIDS for some time to come. The number of cases which require treatment in Scotland in the immediate future is estimated to be fairly low, (as of January 1987, about 5 cases) however, an increase in the number of cases for treatment can be anticipated in the future. The cost of treatment with Zidovudine per patient is estimated to be about £5,000 per annum.

Because of the need to channel the distribution of Zidovudine to the points of greatest need it has been agreed with Wellcome that initial supplies will be distributed via one hospital pharmacy in each of three Health Boards: Greater Glasgow (Ruchill Hospital), Lothian (City Hospital), Tayside (Kings Cross Hospital) assuming that there are patients requiring treatment in these areas. These arrangements will be subject to ongoing revision depending on changes in availability of the drug or in the number or geographic distribution of AIDS cases requiring Zidovudine treatment.

MSK00910.037

Wellcome have mailed all doctors and pharmacists (copy attached) announcing the availability of Zidovudine and indicating how supplies may be obtained.

A copy of this letter (and enclosures) is attached for the attention of Chief Administrative Pharmaceutical Officers.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

GRAHAM CALDER
Chief Pharmacist

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