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Dear Dr Lee

Thank you for your letter of 18 November to the Chief Medical Officer who has asked me to reply to your enquiry regarding recombinant Factor VIII.

The advice that I have received suggests that there is no evidence that recombinant Factor VIII is any safer than plasma derived Factor VIII at the present time. You will be aware that recombinant Factor VIII contains plasma derived albumin as a carrier. I also understand that recombinant products themselves are not without side effects.

You will be aware that the Department issued guidance to purchasers to help them in placing contracts for the care of haemophilia patients. Purchasers are guided by expert advice. However they must be assured that the money they spend is determined by efficacy of treatment as well as value for money. This is to ensure that the best health care is obtained for the resources available, and that demonstrable benefit must be achieved if extra costs are to be spent on one group of patients with less available for others.

I understand that Dr Colvin will be meeting with DH officials to discuss concerns about the contracting process in respect of haemophilia care. It may be appropriate to wait for the results of those discussions.

yours sincerely

GRO-C

J S METTERS
Deputy Chief Medical Officer