

3 April 1995

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Dear Doctor

HEPATITIS C AND BLOOD TRANSFUSION LOOKBACK

I am sending this letter to inform you of the guidance and procedures for the lookback exercise announced by Tom Sackville, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, on 11 January 1995, to trace, counsel and, if necessary, treat those people who may have been infected inadvertently with hepatitis C through blood transfusions.

I am asking for your help in identifying those patients who may have been infected with hepatitis C through blood transfusion. This will concern primarily hospital consultants in a number of specialties, those working in blood transfusion centres, and general practitioners.

An ad hoc Working Party of experts has now drawn up guidance on the procedures for undertaking the lookback exercise and for counselling those identified as being at risk, as well as guidance on the treatment options available.

The guidance and procedures are set out in the Annexes:

- * Guidance on the lookback procedures – Annex A
- * Guidance on counselling and treatment options – Annex B

From the Chief Medical Officer

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CMO (95)1

Hepatitis C and Blood Transfusion Lookback

For action

- All Doctors

For information

- District General Managers
- Chief Executives, NHS Trusts

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It is important that all testing to determine a patient's hepatitis C status is undertaken by diagnostic microbiology laboratories with the capability of performing PCR for hepatitis C on site. A list of recommended laboratories will be provided by the National Blood Transfusion Service (Wales) for South Wales and the National Blood Authority for North Wales. Arrangements have been made for the National Blood Authority to bear the cost of such testing in North Wales and the National Blood Transfusion Service (Wales) and the Welsh Office will meet the cost in South Wales.

GRO-C

Dr D J Hine
Chief Medical Officer

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