



# Bury & Rochdale

HEALTH AUTHORITY

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Date: 11th November 1996

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To: All Greater Manchester Chief Executives

Dear Colleague,

## RE: RECOMBINANT FACTOR VIII

We are writing to express our clear view about this new product. The UK Directors of Haemophilia Centres have stated that in their view the majority of haemophilia patients would benefit from the use of this drug as a replacement for plasma derived products. The main benefit they identified is the protection from as yet undiscovered viruses that could cause serious ill health. As such the benefits are hypothetical and impossible to quantify. Other benefits include the reduction of infection with viruses which may not have been fully eliminated from plasma derived products. This is an extremely small risk.

Whilst we recognise the real concern of patients and carers on this issue, particularly in the light of their experience with HIV and AIDS in the 1980s, we have a responsibility to ensure that resources are used cost effectively and equitably. There are many treatments that we know would reduce death and disease in our community but because of a lack of resources we are unable to fully utilise them. Recombinant factor VIII does not fall into this category, indeed there are some concerns about a possible increase in morbidity associated with its use, for example, there could be increased problems with inhibitors or transmission of animal viruses.

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In relation to a health authority's key role, to improve the health of its local population, the use of recombinant factor VIII offers few tangible benefits but the opportunity cost is high. In the light of existing resource constraints we cannot recommend its use in haemophilia patients.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

**DR KEVIN SNEE**  
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Bury & Rochdale Health Authority

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**DR P ELTON**  
Director of Public Health  
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