

Patient catches disease after blood transfusion

# AIDS VIRUS KILLS MAN IN BRITAIN

By JOHN ILLMAN, Medical Correspondent

**DOCTORS** faced a nightmare problem last night after the death of a man in Britain from the mystery disease AIDS.

The victim, who suffered from the blood disorder haemophilia, had received regular transfusions.

And the fear was that he had been killed by a batch of blood contaminated with AIDS by a donor who was a carrier.

But no test has yet been developed which can tell the experts for sure if this is what happened — or if more contaminated blood is still in stock.

Normally, those most likely to catch AIDS — and become carriers — are homosexuals and self-injecting drug addicts. And the new alert began when it was realised that the latest victim, 33-year-old laboratory worker Terence McStay, was neither.

## Dangers

British doctors and medical authorities now face the same dilemma as their colleagues in Australia, where three babies died last week after transfusions. They were among 13 victims there thought to have died because they had received blood contaminated with AIDS by a young homosexual.

Last night Britain's junior Health Minister John Patten announced that a leaflet for blood donors warning against the dangers of passing on AIDS was to be revised and strengthened. And, he said, research already going on to develop a test for AIDS in blood is to be stepped up. The disease has a long incubation period of up to two years.

Mr McStay, from GROC, Lancashire, had been receiving regular transfusions at the Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle upon Tyne, where he had been working, of a plasma formula known as Factor 8.

This is made up at the National Blood

Turn to Page 2, Col 1

INSIDE: Weather 2, World Wide

## AIDS shock

Continued from Page One

Transfusion Service's centre at Elstree, Hertfordshire, from tiny extracts from the blood of hundreds of thousands of donors in Britain and — 60 per cent. of them — the United States. This makes it impossible to rack down an infected donor.

Mr McStay was the second haemophiliac to die in Britain from AIDS after transfusions. The first was in Bristol last year.

A third is suffering symptoms. But doctors stressed that only a tiny proportion of haemophiliacs were affected. And the Haemophilia Society urged sufferers to continue taking Factor 8 because the alternative of going without treatment is very much worse, leaving them at risk of uncontrollable bleeding without a clotting agent.

Dr Peter Jones, head of the Newcastle haemophilia centre, also urged the Government to license a new — but more expensive — form of plasma which is heat-treated to kill the AIDS virus.

## Drifters

In America, there has been alarm over the fact that donors are often paid — and addicts and homosexual drifters are just the kind of people who need the money.

As for Britain, even before the news of Mr McStay's death Dr Richard Tedder, consultant virologist at the Middlesex Hospital, said on BBC Radio yesterday that the present system of showing leaflets about AIDS to potential blood donors was "very clearly insufficient". He was certain homosexuals were still giving blood.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) means sufferers lose immunity to infection. It was first recognised about five years ago in the U.S.A., where more than 3,500 cases have been confirmed. There have been about 90 in Britain, including 37 deaths.

28

**Victim was treated with blood plasma from US and Britain**

## Haemophiliac's death from Aids after transfusion

By Sarah Boseley

A man suffering from haemophilia has died from Aids after receiving a blood transfusion at a Newcastle hospital, it was disclosed yesterday.

Mr Terence McStay, aged 33, was treated with blood plasma from both Britain and the United States. But authorities at Newcastle's Victoria Infirmary do not know whether he developed Aids (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) from contaminated imported plasma or plasma donated here.

Mr McStay is the second British haemophiliac to have died of Aids. In August last year, a middle-aged man who had been taking Factor 8 died at Bristol Royal Infirmary.

Factor 8 is an American-produced blood-clotting product, but the Haemophilia Society has urged its members to continue its use.

Victoria Infirmary's hospital administrator, Mr Barrie Dowdswell, said yesterday: "All we can say with certainty is that Mr McStay received treatment from us, and his haemophilia was treated with

Factor 8, a blood plasma product.

"That was obtained both from this country and America, but the problem is basically that as yet there is no test for Aids, and it has not been possible to identify the cause of his illness with any certainty. No other patient at our centre has Aids, and all patients have been under careful scrutiny."

Mr McStay, a laboratory worker, died at his parent's home in Wishaw, Lancashire, this month. His death will increase pressure on the Government to make Britain self-sufficient in blood products, especially in the light of the deaths in Australia last week of 13 people, including three babies, believed to have been infected with Aids through blood transfusions.

Yesterday the former Health Minister, Sir Gerard Vaughan, urged its members to support for research to identify Aids, and demanded a Commons statement from the Social Services Secretary, Mr Norman Fowler.

He added: "As a country we should aim to be self-sufficient in our blood supplies."

D. EXPRESS

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## New AIDS blood scare in death mystery

By CLARE DOVER  
and PETER DAY

TOUGH new warnings to blood donors will be issued by the Government after the killer disease AIDS claimed another victim.

An inquiry is already under way into the death of 33-year-old Terence McStay, who contracted the disease at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle.

His death — and reports of 13 victims of one blood donation in Queensland, Australia — have alarmed both health workers and the Government. Last night Junior Health Minister Mr John Patten said the warning message in the official leaflet AIDS and the Blood Donor was to be strengthened and a revised version issued.

The disease, mainly found among homosexuals and drug addicts, has killed 37 people in Britain.

In America, however, there have been thousands of cases and 70 have been associated with blood transfusions. In Britain so far there has been none.

A Health Department official admitted, however: "If some blood did slip through it would create a considerable hazard."

## Risk

Mr McStay, a laboratory worker who was neither a homosexual nor a drug addict had however received a blood plasma called Factor 8, some of which had been imported from America.

A haemophiliac, he died at his parents' home in Lancashire.

AIDS is an incurable condition and is believed to be transmitted in blood or by sexual contact, possibly even a kiss.

Dr Richard Tedder, consultant virologist at the Middlesex Hospital, criticised the present system of showing leaflets to potential blood donors.

He said: "I know without doubt that male homosexuals are continuing to give blood."

At great risk from AIDS are the 3,300 haemophiliacs in Britain.

They do not have a clotting agent in their blood and risk bleeding to death even from minor injuries.

Their lifetime is Factor 8 plasma, much of which is imported.

A former Tory Health Minister Sir Gerard Vaughan who is also a doctor, called for Government action to ensure that Britain is self-sufficient in supplies of blood and blood extracts.