

SMALLER HAEMOPHILIA CENTRES

CHELTENHAM HAEMOPHILIA CENTRE

The Centre and relationship with other Haemophilia Centres

1. The Haemophilia Centre at Cheltenham General Hospital was designated as centre number 31. It was described as part of the Oxford Supraregion of haemophilia centres in 1977-1982, but also as not being a centre and as subject to special arrangements.¹ In 1973, the South West Regional Transfusion Centre recorded that it provided Cheltenham General Hospital with cryoprecipitate.²
2. In November 1978, Dr Garden (a consultant pathologist at Cheltenham General Hospital) wrote to Dr Bidwell (at PFL, Oxford) to request a supply of Factor IX concentrate for a patient who was registered with the Sheffield and Coventry Centres but was to be in the Cheltenham area for a period of time.³ Dr Garden explained that the Hospital “*would be willing to hold supplies of factor IX for him to draw as required though of course we are not staffed to provide the services of a Haemophilia centre*”. As well as providing the material, Dr Bidwell explained in her response that she had spoken to Dr Rizza, who had patients in the Cheltenham area, and that they suggested that Oxford be regarded as Cheltenham’s Reference Centre in case of any queries.⁴

Numbers of patients treated and blood products usage

3. No annual returns have been identified for the Centre and very few other contemporaneous documents are available. Dr Garden was included in a list of recipients, in April 1984, of a letter concerning the BPL/PFL Factor IX, though it is unclear if the product was used at the Centre.⁵

¹ HCDO0000138_012

² DHSC0100026_061

³ OXUH0000872_002

⁴ OXUH0000872_001

⁵ BPLL0005856

Knowledge of risk of hepatitis AIDS/HTLV-III

4. Dr Garden is not recorded as having attended any UKHCDO meetings in the 1970s or 1980s. Given the special arrangements which were said to apply to it, it is unclear whether representatives of the Centre/Cheltenham General Hospital attended UKHCDO meetings, or whether it was provided with the minutes of or reports circulated for such meetings.

Other information

5. In April 1985, Dr Marilyn Crofts, a consultant haematologist at Cheltenham General Hospital, wrote to the director of the South West Regional Transfusion Centre about the possibility of parents donating small amounts of blood for neonates who required top-up transfusions.⁶ The request followed recent coverage of a baby who had died of AIDS at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Dr Crofts stated that *“it may not in an emergency be possible to screen this blood for hepatitis or cytomegalovirus, and that this probably represents a greater risk than AIDS”*.
6. In response, Dr Fraser explained that he had no objection to staff in a neonate unit or parents of premature babies offering small volumes of blood for top ups, but that he felt *‘it most important that these donations were screened for CMV and Hepatitis prior to the transfusion’*.⁷ As for testing of donations for HTLV-III, he added: *“I do not think that this Service will be in a position to test for HTLV III antibodies until September at the very earliest”*.
7. It appears that, in early 1990, Dr Dalton of the Hospital’s Haematology Department expressed an interest in enrolling an untransfused patient in a study of BPL’s 8Y product.⁸

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⁶ NHBT0091483_001

⁷ NHBT0091483_002

⁸ OXUH0000724_002

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