

12 March, 1998



Mr Richard Smith
Editor
British Medical Journal
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Dear Richard

You may recall that in 1995 the UK Department of Health announced that a Lookback at recipients of blood or blood components derived from anti-HCV positive donors would be undertaken. This was a huge exercise, the value of which was viewed by some with a certain scepticism. However, as a service we felt that if we were to undertake this exercise, then we needed to get as much value out of it as possible, in particular to make this an opportunity to study the clinical course of HCV related disease, for which at present in this country there is very little data.

We therefore propose that a National Register of HCV Infections with a Known Date of Acquisition should be set up and funded by the Department of Health. The objective being that this Register will provide a national resource for researchers and clinicians to undertake further studies to increase our understanding of HCV-related disease.

We are now at the stage where we would like to publicise the establishment of this Register, such that clinicians and researchers are aware of its existence, such that proposals to access this data can be channelled through the National HCV Register Steering Group.

I am enclosing a copy of a proposed Editorial on this topic, and I would be very grateful if you might consider publishing this Editorial in the BMJ sometime in the near future. I do hope you will give this your serious consideration. The HCV Lookback Programme certainly caused a lot of interest at the time of its launch. It would be nice to show that out of all that effort, something constructive has been created, and I would like it to have

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the widest possible circulation, such that all clinicians are aware of this development. Anything to do with blood and blood transfusion, and transmitted infections, seems to be the high profile topic of the moment, and for once this is a bit of good news rather than bad!

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

Dr E Angela E Robinson
National Medical Director

Enc: Proposed Editorial "*A national register of HCV infections with a known date of acquisition*".

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