

1. Dr McGovern
PS to CMO
109 Richmond House

From: Dr Rejman HC(M)2

2. Ms M Smith
PS to PS(H)
414 Richmond House

Date: 12 January 1993

cc: Dr Metters DCMO
Mr Malone-Lee DCA
Dr Rubery HP(M)
Dr Jefferys MCA/A
Dr Hangartner HC(M)1
Dr Halliday HC(M)1
Dr Hilton HP(M)1
Dr Lader HP(M)
Mr Garlick ASPU
Mr Scofield CA-OPU
Dr Purves MCA/A1
Mr Canavan CA-OPU2
Mr Pudlo ASPU1

Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Blood and Tissue for Transplantation (MSBT)

Introduction

1. Ministers are asked to approve the replacement of the existing Advisory Committee on the Virological Safety of Blood (ACVSB) by a new expert committee, the MSBT, to advise on a much wider range of microbiological safety issues that affect blood, tissues and organs for transplantation. The new committee would provide a co-ordinated source of advice on tissues and organs for the first time.

Background

2. In 1989 UK Health Ministers established the ACVSB to advise on safety issues affecting the blood supply in view of the growing awareness by the public of safety issues in health. No similar body exists in respect of tissues and organs for transplantation although many of the same risks of transmitting diseases exist as with blood. Advice in respect of safety issues on transplantation is sought from a variety of sources and where appropriate advice from the ACVSB in relation to blood has also been promulgated to transplants. These ad hoc arrangements can form a useful contribution to Departmental thinking but are not a proper basis for formulating Departmental policy.
3. Professional and administrative officials are agreed on the need for a new Committee and recommend that the ACVSB should be replaced by the MSBT. This new Committee would advise on the full range of microbiological safety issues which affect both blood and tissues for transplantation, and thereby avoid the duplication that would arise from having separate bodies examining many of the same issues in respect of blood supply and tissue transplants. The suggested terms of reference are set out in Annex A.

4. Furthermore, the ACVSB have increasingly found that they have had to consider non-virological aspects of blood safety. This is beyond its present remit but in the absence of another body responsible for giving advice on such matters, the ACVSB has been asked to do so.

Composition of the new Committee

5. It is suggested that the new body should be chaired by the DCMO, Dr Metters who currently chairs the ACVSB. Membership should be drawn from the existing ACVSB and to reflect the widened remit of the MSBT two microbiologists would be substituted for two of the four current virologists, and two transplant surgeons would be added to the membership.
6. We believe this would provide the MSBT with the proper balance of expertise to carry out its functions while ensuring that numbers do not make the Committee unwieldy. The suggested membership list is at Annex B.

Other Health Departments

7. The MSBT would advise all UK Health Ministers and the Territorial Departments would each have their own observer on the new Committee. A letter for Minister to send to his Territorial colleagues is at Annex C.

Decisions sought

8. Minister is asked to agree to:-
- i) the winding up of the ACVSB; and
 - ii) the establishment of the MSBT with the terms of reference at Annex A. If so, officials will write inviting the proposed members to serve.

GRO-C

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ANNEX A

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF BLOOD AND
TISSUES FOR TRANSPLANTATION (MSBT)

Proposed terms of reference

"To advise the Health Departments of the UK on measures to ensure the microbiological safety of blood and tissues for transplantation.

In making recommendations in relation to blood, the Committee will bear in mind the need for maintaining an adequate supply of blood of appropriate quality for both immediate use and for plasma processing."

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ANNEX B

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF BLOOD AND
TISSUES FOR TRANSPLANTATION (MSBT)Membership

Chairman:	Dr J Metters	DCMO
Members :	Dr H H Gunson	National Director, NBTS.
	Dr R S Lane	Director, Blood Products Laboratory.
	Miss R Lord	Surgeon, specialising in kidney transplantation, Royal London Hospital.
	Mr P McMaster	Surgeon, specialising in liver transplantation, Birmingham.
	Dr R Mitchell	Director, Glasgow & West of Scotland BTS.
	Dr R Mortimer	Virologist, Public Health Laboratory Service.
	Dr R J Perry	Director, Protein Fractionation Centre, Edinburgh.
	Dr D Shanson	Microbiologist, Westminster Hospital
	Dr D W Gorst (provisional)	Consultant Haematologist Royal Lancaster Infirmary
	Prof J Williams	Microbiologist, London Hospital Medical College.
	Prof A Zuckerman	Virologist, Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine.
Observers:	Dr N Halliday	DH
	Dr J Purves	MCA
	Dr A M George	Welsh Office
	Dr G Mock	DHSS (NI)
	Dr A Keel	Scottish Office (H&HD)
Secretariat:	Dr A Rejman	Medical Secretary
	Mr J Canavan	Administrative Secretary
	Mr J Rutherford	Assistant Administrative Secretary

ANNEX C

Draft Letter to Territorial Health Ministers

Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Blood and Tissue for Transplantation (MSBT)

I attach a Paper supporting the formation of a new advisory committee to replace the Advisory Committee on the Virological Safety of Blood with a body to provide advice to all Health Ministers on the whole range of microbiological safety issues in respect of both blood and tissue for transplantation.

We support these proposals and the terms of reference and I would be grateful for your agreement.

TOM SACKVILLE

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