

SNB.001.9368

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ACVSB1/2

OVERVIEW OF PROBLEMS FOR THIS COMMITTEE

1. The EC Directives on Blood Products could have a major impact on the UK. Products now made under Crown Privilege will have to be licensed. Blood will have to be harvested from donors selected according to the Directives and certain tests for virological conditions may be mandatory.

This committee must ensure that consultation takes place so that the UK representative at the EC is adequately briefed on all the relevant interests, and in the event of conflict the final decision should lie with this advisory committee. Thus each meeting of this committee is to be briefed on the current position.

2. AIDS viruses (HIV1 and HIV2)

The transfusion service, having taken note of the views of EAGA, attempts to select donors at low risk of HIV infection. This advisory committee may be considered to have a locus here only should there be disputes, say between the fractionators and the NBTS, on these exclusion criteria. In this age of litigation it is important, however, that common standards are operated throughout the UK, unless justified on clear epidemiological grounds. At present in England, slightly different exclusion categories are used by different transfusion services and we would look to the National Director to achieve rationalisation.

Items to be brought to this committee in due course will include (a) a revised version of the "high risk" groups as advised by EAGA, amended for example in the light of increasing evidence of high prevalence heterosexual spread in some countries outside Africa, (b) consideration of if and when HIV2 screening should become routine.

3. HTLV1

In view of recent action by the FDA, this problem needs urgent attention so a considered UK line can be given. This is an agenda item for this meeting - see paper ACVSB1/5.

4. Non A Non B

The issue of surrogate or direct testing for Non A Non B hepatitis is also of some urgency. It is suggested this could be a major item for the next meeting, even though a final decision may have to await UK research currently in progress.

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5. NBTS/NIBSC liaison group

Formed between the NBTS/SNBTS and NIBSC to formulate (scientific) guidelines for the standardisation and safety of blood and blood products. The liaison group would be the appropriate forum for considering the detailed implementation of recommendations arising from the ACVSB.

6. NBTS/CBLA liaison group

A new group to discuss problems such as plasma supply and quality. Covers England and Wales only.

7. Expert Advisory Group on AIDS (EAGA)

Advises the Chief Medical Officers on matters relating to HIV infection. UK wide. Has given advice in the past on HIV1 and HIV2 testing for the transfusion service and will continue to do so if appropriate, but feeding through the Committee on the Virological Safety of Blood.

8. Advisory Group on Hepatitis

This group "provides medical advice to the Chief Medical Officers of the Health Departments on all aspects of communicable hepatitis" and has the appropriate expertise for detailed consideration of the technical aspects of screening donors and plasma for various forms of hepatitis, leaving the advisory committee on the virological safety of blood to consider the wider policy issues.

9. Microbiology Advisory Committee (MAC)

Advises the Department of Health (England) on disinfection and sterilisation applicable in and appropriate to the Health Service, and gives guidance on microbiological aspects of equipment etc. This committee should not overlap with the present committee.

*CPMP - Bureau  
interacts with above committees*

*Set up 1970*

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