

To: Matthew Lees
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Via Email: [matthew.lees@](mailto:matthew.lees@nhs.uk) **GRO-C**

11 September 2024

Dear Matthew

Re: Infected Blood Inquiry: clarifications for Recommendation 6

You will remember that I wrote to you on behalf of NHS England on 10 June 2024 regarding some factual issues in Recommendation 6 of the Infected Blood Inquiry (IBI) report. Thank you for your helpful response to that letter.

Following subsequent internal discussions with national clinical experts, we would like to seek clarification on the following:

- 6a (i) states that 'patients should receive the following care' and 6a (ii) and (iii) that 'patients should receive the same care'. We believe 'should receive' should be replaced with 'should be offered', because patients have the right to refuse care.
- 6a (v)
 - o Please clarify whether the recommendation refers to patients who have previously had Hepatitis C and now have fibrosis/cirrhosis, as opposed to a new case of Hepatitis C? NICE guideline [NG50] states "Offer ultrasound (with or without measurement of serum alpha-fetoprotein) every 6 months as surveillance for hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) for people with cirrhosis".¹
 - o Please clarify whether the recommendation is that these patients should:
 - a) have *every* consultation with a consultant hepatologist;
 - b) have one consultation with a consultant hepatologist but subsequent consultations could be with other members of staff; or

¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng50>

- c) be reviewed by a consultant hepatologist, e.g. through a Multi-Disciplinary Team (but their consultation(s) could be with another professional).

We note that the supporting text to the recommendation refers to the 'involvement' of a consultant hepatologist. We also note that the supporting text references Professor Markis' recommendation that 'those who are infected, including those who have successfully cleared the virus, should be reviewed by a liver specialist at least once.' 'Specialist' is not a protected title and therefore does not necessarily mean a consultant hepatologist.

Many thanks for your continued help on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

GRO-C

Professor Anthony Kessel

Deputy Medical Director (Specialised Services)

National Specialised Commissioning

NHS England

cc: Prof Sir Stephen Powis, National Medical Director, NHS England

John Stewart, National Director, Specialised Commissioning, NHS England

Prof James Palmer, National Medical Director (Specialised Services), NHS England

Dr Richard Aspinall, National Specialty Advisor and CRG Chair, NHS England