

Witness Name: Alice Mackie

Statement No.: WITN2189005

Exhibits: WITN2189006 – WITN2189065

Dated: 30th April 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

EXHIBIT WITN2189021

Council Meetings:
JULY 1989

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MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

MRC: IN CONFIDENCE

REFERENCE SET
NOT TO BE REMOVED

89/ST095
Council:
July 1989

Meeting of the COUNCIL to be held at 20 Park Crescent, London, W1N 4AL, on
Thursday 27 July 1989 at 2.00 pm

AGENDA

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|-----|--|----------|
| | 1. Announcements and apologies | Oral |
| (S) | 2. Minutes | 89/ST069 |
| | 3. Matters Arising | Oral |
| \$ | 4. Strategy Committee - minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 1989 | 89/ST068 |
| | 5. Report of meeting of Strategy Committee on 27 July 1989 | Oral |
| \$ | 6. Council Committee on AIDS - minutes of meeting held on 9 May 1989 | 89/ST080 |
| | 7. Minutes of Board Meetings: Neurosciences (April); Cell (April); Systems (April); HSRC (April). Report on any subsequent meetings | 89/ST091 |
| | 8. ABRC Review of the Research Councils' responsibilities for the biological sciences (Morris Report) | 89/ST078 |
| \$ | 9. The future of University Biology: report of the Review of Biological Sciences (Southwood Report) - MRC response | 89/ST089 |
| (S) | 10. Clinical Research Centre (CRC): Section of Haematology (Head of Section: Dr I Chanarin). Proposals for the future of the Section following Dr Chanarin's retirement | 89/S136 |
| \$ | 11. Clinical Research Centre. Recommendation from the Administrative Director that Dr A D B Webster should be appointed Assistant Director (Clinical) | 89/S093 |

A.7/199

WP/E22/27

\$ Not shown to Staff Side

(S) Shown in part to Staff Side

SC Shown to Staff Side Chairman and Secretary

-2-

- SC 12. National Institute for Medical Research (Director: Dr J J Skehel FRS). Proposal for the establishment of a Laboratory of Molecular Structure in the Physiological and Neural Mechanisms Group and the appointment of Dr J Feeney as Head of Laboratory 89/C761
13. National Institute for Medical Research: Genes and Cellular Controls Group (Head of Group: Dr P W J Rigby), Group Review 89/C731
14. Interdisciplinary Research Centre (IRC) in protein engineering at Cambridge: scientific scope and arrangements 89/C890 to follow
- SC 15. Proposals for an MRC Unit in Social and Community Psychiatry (Director-Designate: Professor J P Leff) 89/N077
- SC 16. MRC Cyclotron Unit (Administrative Director: Dr K I Gibson). Proposal to establish a second PET scanner facility: scheme design report on associated building conversation costs 89/ST088
- SC 17. MRC Radiobiology Unit (Director: Professor G D Adams). Major refurbishment of the roof of Building 383: scheme design report 89/ST087
- \$ 18. Combined clinical medical course and PhD programme at the University of Cambridge 89/FS21
19. MRC Pension Trust Ltd - Change in Directors 89/
20. Private (Endowment) Funds. Annual Review for the year ended 31 March 1989 89/FS24
21. Private Funds. Award from Cusrow Wadia Fund 89/FS23
22. Technical staff category: restructuring 89/P007

Items to be discussed only on the initiative of Council members

23. Clinical Research Centre: Endocrinology Research Group (Head of Group: Dr R N Clayton). Progress report 1983-1988 and report of visiting sub-committee 89/S135
24. Any other matters which members may wish to raise

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

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MRC: IN CONFIDENCE

REFERENCE SET
NOT TO BE REMOVEDCouncil: 89/ST080
AIDS Committee: July 1989
July 1989

Meeting of the COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON AIDS held at 20 Park Crescent, London W1N 4AL
on Tuesday 9 May 1989

MINUTESPresentMembers

Lord Jellicoe (Chairman)
Sir David Crouch
Professor C N Hales
Mr R Key
Dr I S Macdonald
Dr D A Rees
Mrs Renee Short
Dr J W G Smith

Staff

Dr G C Schild (item 2 onwards)
Dr Jane Cope
Mr B C Dodd
Mrs N F Morris
Mr L C Dane (Secretariat)

Apologies for absence

Sir Donald Acheson
Sir Austin Bide
Dr K C Calman

A1/196

1. **Directorship of the AIDS Directed Programme - proposal to extend the appointment of Dr G C Schild (89/S054;file P19/1210)**

The Committee noted Dr Schild's substantial personal contribution to the success of the Directed Programme since taking up the Directorship in October 1987, and had no hesitation in agreeing to the extension of his appointment as Programme Director for the period 1.4.90 - 31.3.92 and to continue reimbursement of the appropriate proportion of Dr Schild's salary from Directed Programme funds, subject to the formal agreement of the National Biological Standards Board.

Dr Schild then joined the meeting for the remaining items.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 22 December 1988 were approved.

3. **Matters arising**

From the minutes of the meeting held on 22 December 1988

Minute 23 - Parliamentary briefing

The Chairman reported that the briefing on 16 January had been well attended and successful. It had been held jointly with the All-Party Parliamentary group on AIDS and a brief report would be published in their Parliamentary AIDS Digest. It was agreed that the office should arrange for members of the Committee to receive future copies of the Digest.

Minute 25 - Anonymous testing

Dr Cope reported that the MRC proposals for anonymous testing had been submitted to the Department of Health early in March and were now under consideration. In addition consultations had taken place on ethical and other issues with professional bodies, and a seminar was planned to bring together representatives of the professions to address any continuing concerns. The Committee welcomed these developments.

Minute 26 - Clothier report

Dr Cope reported that consultation had been completed and overall the comments received had been favourable.

Minute 29(i) Visit by the Princess of Wales

The Chairman reported that the Princess of Wales had visited Park Crescent on 23 March for a briefing on AIDS research. Presentations were given by Dr Ian Weller (the Concorde trial), Professor Catherine Peckham (epidemiology), Dr Sally Macintyre (social and behavioural research) and Dr Schild (Directed Programme), and the Princess had then met a number of other scientists involved in the MRC research programme.

Minute 29(ii) Research on AIDS in prisons.

Dr Cope reported that preliminary proposals for anonymous testing for HIV in prison hospitals had been included in the MRC proposals. If this were undertaken and indicated a significant prevalence, the case for further studies would be strengthened. The Committee reiterated their concern about the need to undertake research on the prevalence of HIV in prison, and agreed that progress should be monitored at future meetings.

4. Proposal to invite HRH The Princess of Wales to visit an AIDS research laboratory.

Dr Cope reported that following the successful briefing for the Princess of Wales the office was exploring the possibilities for a laboratory visit. The views of the Committee were sought on which research centre to propose. The preferred options suggested by the office were the University of Glasgow (Professor Jarrett's team in the Department of Veterinary Pathology, and the MRC Medical Sociology Unit) and the University of Cambridge (focussing on work in the Clinical School and at the Laboratory of Molecular Biology and MRC Immunopathology Unit).

The Committee welcomed the proposal that the Princess of Wales be invited to see research in progress and agreed that Glasgow should be the first choice. The office were advised to ensure that the use of cats in the research at Glasgow would not lead to difficulties, and to consider involving researchers from Edinburgh in the programme.

5. Report on the Directed Programme

Dr Schild reported that the Directed Programme continued to receive good quality applications, although more work on drug development was needed. There were now about 100 projects being funded, and the Steering Committee was effective in monitoring progress and identifying teams requiring guidance and support. Dr Schild highlighted two important developments:

- i) a paper on recombinant polio viruses would be published in Nature on 1 June.
- ii) a group had met to consider research on the nature of drug resistance, following the discovery of resistant viruses in AZT - treated individuals, and consideration was being given to setting up an international repository of resistant viruses.

Dr Schild reported that good progress had been made on strengthening links between the Directed and Strategic programmes, and plans were being developed for collaboration on drug resistance and the use of molecular techniques in the study of modes of transmission. The availability of trained manpower was still a problem, particularly at the postdoctoral level. Measures had been taken to increase supply at the postgraduate level (and Mr Dodd reported that DES approval had been obtained to increase the stipend for AIDS studentships by £1100 per annum in London and £1000 outside London), but these would take time to have an effect. The Steering Committee were therefore considering a scheme for six-year senior fellowships.

On international relations Dr Schild reported that it was now planned to sign the formal agreement with West Germany in the autumn, and the West Germans were interested in tripartite collaboration with the UK and France. Mr Key reported that he had been approached by WHO, who were interested in co-funding work in the UK. It was agreed that a letter should be drafted for the Chairman welcoming the suggestion and seeking further details.

The Committee noted Dr Schild's report with interest.

6. Report on the Strategic Programme.

Professor Hales reported that the Strategic Programme now comprised 14 projects on the clinical features of HIV, eight on diagnosis and opportunistic infection, 32 on prevalence, and 24 on studies of treatment. These were supported by grants from the Systems Board and TMRB, and in 1989/90 expenditure would be £3.6m from the grant-in-aid, £1.8m from the Department of Health for epidemiology, and £114K from CDA. The Boards were advised by four major committees: on epidemiology, therapeutic trials, the nervous system, and AIDS in Africa.

Professor Hales reported that the Concorde 1 trial of zidovudine in asymptomatic HIV infection now involved 21 centres in the UK and 320 patients had been recruited. The target was 1,000. Other small-scale trials were under way of combined antiviral and immunotherapy, and prophylaxis for bacterial infection, while epidemiological studies were taking place in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. Plans were well developed for setting up a brain bank, and for setting up an MRI facility dedicated to AIDS research.

Dr Smith outlined the major studies in Africa. In Uganda epidemiological studies were under way to identify the routes by which the infection is spread, and in West Africa the possibility of extending existing studies of HIV 2 infection in the Gambia to Guinea Bissau, where prevalence is higher, was being explored. Dr Smith reported that the MRC was respected by the Governments concerned, an important factor for the successful conduct of research in Africa.

In response to a question Dr Cope reported that recruitment to the Concorde 1 trial, had been slower than expected for a variety of reasons including voluntary groups discouraging enrolment, and a Sunday Times journalist campaigning against the trial. It was agreed that the office should copy the relevant press coverage to members of the Committee.

The Committee welcomed the report on the Strategic Programme and agreed that opportunities should be taken to increase public awareness of the range of activities being undertaken.

7. Links with industry for AIDS research - report on current status (89/S074)

Dr Schild outlined the development of the links between industry and the Directed Programme, and reported that, as a result of recent discussions, he was now more optimistic about future involvement with Celltech.

Members were agreed that the paper reported impressive progress, which it would be valuable to draw to the attention of Ministers. Dr Cope reported that details of collaboration with industry would be included in the Annual Report to Ministers which would be produced in the summer. The Committee expressed the hope that the report could be produced before the summer recess, and endorsed a proposal by the Secretary that he brief the No 10 Policy Unit prior to its issue.

The paper was noted.

8. Programme of meetings for 1989

The programme was approved.

9. Any other business

Dr Rees referred to the concern expressed at the last Council meeting about the implications of the Riley report on veterinary education for Professor Jarrett's work in Glasgow. He now understood that the UFC planned no action in the near future.

E21/8

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

APPENDIX III

MRC: IN CONFIDENCE

REFERENCE SET
NOT TO BE REMOVED

89/ST049
 Systems: July 1989
 Council: July 1989

PHYSIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND DISORDERS BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18 April 1989

PRESENT

Members

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Professor C N Hales (Chairman) | Professor A H Henderson |
| Dr M E Abrams | Professor P W Howie |
| Professor D J P Barker | Professor A J McMichael |
| Professor C L Berry | Professor R H Michell |
| Professor A M Breckenridge | Dr Maureen E Owen |
| Professor G Burnstock | Professor J R Pattison |
| Dr K C Calman (morning session only) | Dr N B Pride |
| Professor C R W Edwards | Professor J G P Sissons |
| Professor J D Hardcastle | Dr J J Skehel |

Headquarters Office Staff

Dr D Evered (attended for item 10)
 Dr D A Rees (attended for items 10 and 17)
 Dr A B Stone (acting Board Secretary)
 Dr R E M Ward (Board HEO)

Other members of headquarters staff attended for particular items

Apologies for absence

Professor A Aynsley-Green
 Mr J Barnes
 Professor C J Smith
 Professor E M Symonds
 Professor R E Weir

Agenda 89/ST042
 File A5/185

WPC 1/74

37. Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Professor J R Pattison to the Board.

The Board was pleased to congratulate: (i) Mr Richard Peto of ICRF, a member of Systems Board's AIDS Therapeutic Trials Committee on his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society, (ii) Dr Sheila Gore of the MRC Biostatistics Unit on being awarded the Guy Medal of the Royal Statistical Society, (iii) Dr A M Prentice of the Dunn Nutrition Unit on being awarded the Peter Debye Prize for 1989 (to be shared with Dr M J Dauncey of the AFRC) for his work on nutrition and the regulation of energy exchange and (iv) Professor R H Michell on being awarded the CIBA Medal and Prize of the Biochemical Society.

The Board also noted that the Princess of Wales had visited the MRC on 22 March 1989, for a briefing on AIDS research.

The Board learned with regret of the death of Professor David Flenely, a former programme grant holder who had died on 27 March 1989.

38. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 1989 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- (i) Minute 3 (Matters arising) and Minute 136 (Dec 88) (Page 3). 'signal-receptor function' to read 'intracellular targeting of proteins'.
- (ii) Minute 16 Decisions (ii) - 'level requested for the statistician/scientist' to read 'level requested except for the cost of the computer scientist and journals' and 'date sets' to read 'data sets'.

39. Matters arising

Minute 67 (June 88) Dr R P Brettell and Dr A M Richardson

The Board recalled that they had agreed to an award of special project grant support for three years, at a level to be determined in accordance with the conclusions of a visit by an ad hoc group to Edinburgh. After further discussions with the applicants, the level of support had recently been agreed and the grant would be awarded shortly. Members were informed that the applicants were likely to apply for a supplementation of the grant, to undertake HLA typing and more detailed analysis of drug use, in the near future.

Minute 124 (Oct 88) Human volunteer facility for infectious diseases

Members were informed that following their decision in December 1988 to support the proposal that a special training fellowship in infectious diseases be established, the Strategy Committee had now approved funding for this fellowship. It was hoped that a fellow would be identified to begin his training programme in the next academic year.

Minute 135 (Dec 88) Systems Board Membership

The Chairman announced that the following had agreed to serve on the Systems Board from September 1989:

Professor Eva Alberman (Joint Unit of Epidemiology, London Hospital Medical College/St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College).

influenced the occurrence and clinical features of AIDS in patients with allergic, parasitic and other diseases which induced eosinophilia. The total support requested was £146k over three years for a research assistant, a technical assistant, expenses and equipment.

Members agreed that the rationale for believing that eosinophils were infected by HIV in HIV antibody-positive patients was sound and that this was an important hypothesis to test. If it were true it could have significant implications for the spread of HIV in tropical countries where eosinophilia associated with helminth infections was prevalent. The proposals were essentially to repeat earlier studies on HIV infection of monocytes and macrophages, and were of high scientific merit. However, members were a little disappointed that the present application did not include more detailed and applied studies that would follow if their hypothesis proved correct - for example on whether infection of eosinophils played a major role in the progression and spread of the Syndrome in tropical countries. Members noted the referees' views on the difficulties involved in undertaking the transcription study, but agreed that the method proposed was the only suitable one currently available. The involvement of Dr Nabel (Ann Arbor, Michigan) was considered important for the success of the project.

Members agreed that special project grant support should be awarded for three years at the level requested, except for the support for the technician, the need for which had not been justified satisfactorily.

Decisions

- (i) The proposals are of high scientific merit.
 - (ii) Special project grant support is awarded for three years at the level requested, less that for the technician post.
47. Dr C A Ludlam (Haemophilia Centre, Edinburgh), Dr J F Peutherer (Virology, University of Edinburgh) and Dr C M Steel (MRC Human Genetics Unit, Edinburgh): application for special project grant support - 'Clinical, immune and virological investigation of haemophiliacs with particular reference to HIV infection'. (89/S062 File: G8902835).

Drs Ludlam, Peutherer and Steel proposed to continue their longitudinal study of a cohort of 32 haemophiliacs who had been given a single HIV-infected batch of NHS factor VIII concentrate in 1984. In the 29 individuals still alive, the applicants proposed to characterise in detail changes in a) the virus itself, b) specific anti-viral immune responses and c) non-specific immunological parameters in the patients, to provide an insight into the mechanism by which HIV caused clinical decline. The studies would be prospective and retrospective the latter making use of a collection of serial serum and leucocyte samples stored over a period of 6 years. The total support requested was £190.2k over 3 years for a research assistant, two technical assistants, expenses and equipment.

Members agreed with the referees in supporting the proposal, especially as the cohort of patients was a well-studied group and one whose date of infection was known accurately. It was important to continue to document this cohort of patients. Of the new studies, the use of PCR to detect the HIV genome in seronegative patients was considered particularly worthwhile. The Board noted that the Steering Committee on HIV Infection and the Nervous System had identified the importance of detailed studies of this group of patients because

of the potential elementary differences from homosexual or neonatal groups.

The Board had a number of reservations about the proposals. Insufficient detail had been provided of the 'plan of investigation'. Greater attention should be given to the virology; for example, in isolating the virus from the offending factor VIII preparation and studying possible variations in virus in the infected patients. There was also concern that a greater proportion (8 out of 18 seropositives) of the cohort had experienced problems with opportunistic infections compared with other similar groups of patients (eg those at Oxford); the applicants should be encouraged to investigate possible reasons for this difference. Furthermore, the applicants had not addressed the possibility that, because some of the asymptomatic individuals would be enrolled in the Concorde I Trial (and might therefore be taking zidovudine), this could confound the results of the study.

The Board agreed that the existing work should be continued. However, because of their concerns about the new lines of study, support should be awarded for one year only, and the applicants should be encouraged to submit revised proposals in due course, taking account of the Board's views and those of the referees, which should be sent to them. The level of funding requested was considered excessive; in particular there was insufficient justification for the post of clinical lecturer. Support should be awarded for the two technicians, expenses of £14,795 and £1400 for equipment (as requested).

Decisions:

- i) The proposals for continuing the existing study are of high scientific merit; those for new work are presented in insufficient detail and generally do not focus on the most important goals.
 - ii) Special project grant support is awarded for one year only at the reduced level of two technicians, expenses of £14.8k and £1.4k for equipment
 - iv) The applicants should receive the comments both of the referees and of the Board, and should be encouraged to submit revised and more detailed proposals for the additional work they wish to undertake.
48. Professor C S F Easmon, Dr I N Brown and Dr J W Dale (Medical Microbiology, St Mary's Hospital Medical School): application for special project grant support - 'Characterisation and biological significance of plasmids in Mycobacterium avium - intracellulare (MAI) from AIDS patients'. (89/S061 file: G8825658)

Professor Easmon with Drs Brown and Dale proposed to test the hypothesis that MAI strains, that cause disseminated disease in the late stage of HIV infection, gain entry through the gastrointestinal tract and that they may have genetically determined 'virulence' characteristics that distinguish them from other MAI and enable them to behave in this way. The total support requested was £160.1k over 3 years for two research assistants, expenses and equipment, part of which would be for work at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, and part for work at Surrey University.

Members agreed that the proposal was interesting and important, particularly the continuation of the present clinical study and those aspects concerned with phenotypic analysis of MAI. However the Board had reservations about certain other parts of the application. They considered that the isolation of

additional strains of HIV from AIDS patients was unlikely to be worthwhile as the applicants had succeeded in isolating only nine strains during the previous two years and that a further 59 strains isolated in Cardiff would be available to the applicants in any case. Concerning the genetic characterisation of isolated MAI strains, it was not clear from the application how much of what the group proposed to do would duplicate work that had already been undertaken in the USA. The proposals for studying virulence characteristics had been presented in insufficient detail and appeared naive in many respects. Referee C had raised many of the points and it was agreed that his comments should be sent unattributed to the applicants.

The Board approved the request for support for the continuation of the present clinical study and phenotypic characterisation of MAI obtained from AIDS patients and other sources. They agreed that if the applicants wished to undertake genetic characterisation of isolated MAI strains or to study virulence characteristics, they should submit a separate and more detailed application. Support was therefore awarded at the level of one scientific assistant (to be appointed at St Mary's Hospital Medical School), expenses of £13,350 and equipment totaling £8339.

Decisions

- (i) The proposals to continue the existing clinical study and to undertake phenotypic characterisation of MAI are of high scientific merit; insufficient detail is provided of the proposals for genetic characterisation and studies of virulence.
- (ii) Special project grant support is awarded for three years at the reduced level of one scientific assistant, expenses of £13.4k, and £8.4k for equipment expenditure which will be incurred at St Mary's Hospital Medical School.
- (iii) The applicants should receive the comments of Referee C. They should submit a separate and more detailed application if they wish to seek support for work on genetic characterisation and virulence of MAI.

49. Professor C Thompson, Dr Barbara Wilson and Dr Jane Lones (Psychiatry, Southampton Medical School): application for special project grant support - 'Neuropsychological and psychiatric morbidity in haemophiliac children, adolescents and adults infected with HIV' (89/S063 File: G8901910).

Professor Thompson and Drs Wilson and Lones proposed to study the psychiatric and cognitive aspects of HIV infection in a population of haemophiliac boys and adults using non-HIV infected haemophiliacs and normals as controls. The total support requested was £77.6k over 3 years for two research assistants, expenses and equipment.

The Board recalled that, at their meeting in October 1988, they had considered an earlier version of these proposals. They had endorsed the views of the referees and had declined support, but had recommended that their comments and those of the referees should be passed back to the applicants. The Board had requested that the applicants should be invited to submit revised proposals after discussing the proposed psychiatric tests with Professor Rutter.

Members noted that the applicants had improved their proposals and that Professor Rutter and the other referees were supportive. They re-iterated their earlier view that the application addressed an area of importance;

however the individuals to be investigated were a very specific group and it was not clear that the findings would have a wider relevance. Nevertheless, the Board agreed that the proposals were of high scientific merit and should be supported at the level requested. Members commented that some of the individuals to be studied were likely to be taking zidovudine; the applicants had not addressed the possibility that this might confound their results.

Furthermore, in the proposals the applicants had not indicated whether they would prescribe zidovudine to children whose only symptom of HIV infection proved to be impaired psychiatric or cognitive function. Some might consider it unethical not to do so. This question should be answered before the study started. Members agreed that these issues were likely to have been considered already by the applicants and requested that they be asked to respond to the Board's concerns.

Decisions

- (i) The proposals are of high scientific merit
- (ii) Special project grant support is awarded for three years at the level requested.
- (iii) The applicants should be asked to respond to the Board's concerns regarding the possible confounding effects of zidovudine treatment in some individuals, and on the question of treatment if some individuals otherwise believed to be asymptomatic were shown to have impaired cognitive or psychiatric function.

50. Professor M W Adler & Dr Anne M Johnson (Genito-Urinary Medicine, University College & Middlesex School of Medicine): application for extension of special project grant support - 'Risk of heterosexual transmission of HIV' (89/S067 File: G8603212)

This grant, held by Professor Adler and Professor Miller (St Mary's Hospital Medical School), was awarded in 1986 to assess the risk and mode of transmission of HIV to the heterosexual partners of HIV antibody-positive men and women with known risk factors for infection (eg bisexual men, drug users, haemophiliacs etc) in couples recruited from six Departments of Genito-Urinary Medicine in London. Members noted that a parallel study was being undertaken in Edinburgh and had been awarded Council support until September 1990.

Professor Miller had indicated that he no longer played an active part in this project. The application to extend the grant had been submitted by Professor Adler and Dr Johnson. Support was requested at a level of £20.8k over one year for a technical assistant and expenses to complete data collection and follow up for the London study.

Members endorsed the views of the referees that the study was very important in view of the current state of the epidemic and the need to understand the probability and mechanisms of heterosexual spread of the human immunodeficiency virus. The additional support requested in order to ensure completion of the project was modest. Extension of special project grant support should be awarded at the level requested.

Decisions

- (i) The proposal is of high scientific merit.
- (ii) Extension of special project grant support is awarded for one year at the level requested.

51. Dr R W Kelly (MRC Unit of Reproductive Biology, Edinburgh), Dr K James and Mr T B Hargreave (Department of Surgery, Edinburgh University): request for additional funds - 'Character and reversal of immune suppression by seminal prostaglandins'. (89/S065 File: E331/84)

Dr Kelly, Dr James and Mr Hargreave proposed to investigate the influence of prostaglandins (PGs), present in large amounts in human ejaculate, on cells of the immune system. In particular, studies would concentrate on the state of immunosuppression promoted by PGs, the biochemical processes underlying these events, and the ability of HIV to replicate in T cells treated with PGE. Total support requested was £117k over three years for one scientific assistant, one technical assistant and expenses.

While recognising that much of the work would be applicable to sexually transmitted diseases other than AIDS, the Board agreed that the main goal of the project was to understand the mechanisms of PG modification of HIV replication; the project was thus sufficiently AIDS-related for an award to be charged to the special allocation of funds from the Science vote for AIDS research. Members endorsed the view of the referees that the proposal was of high scientific merit and should therefore be supported. The level of support requested was reasonable.

The applicants had, however, presented little evidence that they had sufficient expertise in undertaking HIV replication assays to ensure the success of this aspect of the proposals. Before an award was made the applicants should be asked to provide evidence either that they had such expertise or that they would collaborate with another group that did. A final decision in the award of grant support should rest with Professor McMichael.

Decisions

- (i) The proposal is of high scientific merit.
- (ii) The request for additional funds should be awarded, provided Professor McMichael was satisfied that the applicants possessed, or could draw on, appropriate expertise in HIV assays.

52. Review of research in human nutrition

Dr Rees joined the meeting to introduce this item.

The Board was reminded that the review exercise was carried out with the aim of planning a strategy for future MRC-funded research in human nutrition. Such plans would need to build on existing strengths while also aiming to serve broader interests. High priority areas in which research proposals would be welcomed were outlined in the revised document. In addition, the recent AFRC review of human nutrition research (1987) had emphasised the importance of co-operation between the two research councils, and the Review Group had given thorough consideration to such relationships.

The Board's attention was drawn to the plans for a new nutrition research centre on the New Addenbrook's Hospital site in Cambridge to house the Dunn Nutrition Unit. Government had already provided a considerable sum towards this and the remainder was currently being sought from the food industry.

The Board also noted that following their decision to withdraw from the joint AFRC/MRC training fellowships scheme, training in nutrition research for scientists and clinicians would be available through the MRC's open