

File HCV.

**REPORT ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF ANTI HCV TESTING**

**1 Confirmatory Results from Newcastle Public Health Laboratory (PHL)**

Abbott anti HCV screen repeat reactive samples have been sent to Newcastle PHL since the 23 4 91 for anti HCV confirmatory testing by Ortho Recombinant Immunoblot Assay (RIBA) 2nd generation. So far 165 results have been returned with a current turn around time of one week. However the results we receive are not recorded in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendation but by their own criteria which seems to depend on the strength of the Ortho screen result they obtain. See Fig 1.

The test results are not graded according to the strength of reaction as stated by the manufacturers' instructions<sup>1</sup>, ie -, +/-, 1+, 2+, 3+, 4+; but simply as + or -. This makes it difficult to make comparisons with other results, as in those also tested by Manchester PHL, or to extrapolate data for interpretation ourselves. \*

The obvious result of this diversion from the manufacturers' recommended interpretation of results is that the overall appearance of the test results is altered. See Fig 2.

Although Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing was requested of Newcastle PHL from the beginning and fresh frozen plasma packs were sent for each repeat reactive for this purpose, no results have been forthcoming and as a consequence we stopped any requests or material for PCR from the 19 8 91. ✓

**2 Discrepant Results from Manchester and Newcastle PHLs**

There were 8 results which differed significantly between Manchester and Newcastle PHLs. See Fig 3.

It is difficult to ascertain the significance these results may have when applied to the donor. However more recent data (reported later) seems to show that there is a higher rate of false positivity on RIBA C-100 than other RIBA antigens.

Note 1: Chiron RIBA HCV test system instructions booklet.