

Recombinant Factor VIII for the Treatment of Haemophilia A

Enquiry

In view of the potential risk of transmission of nv CJD through blood products Scottish Haemophilia Directors should be authorised to use:

- (a) recombinant Factor VIII; or
- (b) blood products of North American origin

This response from Scottish Directors of Public Health:

1. Recognises that:
 - haemophilia patients have been exposed to recurrent risks of blood borne infection from the use of natural blood products (e.g. Hep B, HIV and Hep C);
 - this enquiry is not about the effectiveness of alternative forms of treatment but about their potential safety and cost;
 - many unknown factors exist in relation to the specific enquiry about a potential risk of transmission of nv CJD through blood products.
2. Supports the need for a full and ongoing assessment of risk and cost-benefits and welcomes the establishment by DOH of an expert group for this purpose.
3. Meantime, advises that Scottish haemophilia patients should have access to recombinant factor VIII in preference to any naturally harvested blood products recognising that:
 - there is no evidence to suggest that North American plasma is more risk-free of all potential transmissible organisms than British plasma;
 - in view of the costs, a phased transfer to recombinant Factor VIII may be necessary taking account of the financial demands on individual Boards.