

## NBS BLOOD & TISSUES SAFETY ASSURANCE GROUP

### CUT OFF DATE FOR vCJD DONOR LOOKBACKS

#### CURRENT SITUATION

CJDSU notifies the National Blood Service (NBS) of all cases of vCJD, regardless of donation history. The NBS carries out a search of donor records. If no match is found on a first search, in an individual not reported to have been a donor, no further action is taken. If a search fails to locate a record relating to an individual who is reported to have been a donor, then further work is required. In many cases, this will involve further investigation through CJDSU with the family/friends who gave the information, together with an attempt to identify the dates and locations of any blood donations.

Two of the latest notifications from CJDSU had a history of blood donation. In the first case, the history was of blood donation "throughout the 1980s". No donor records were located despite further information about the likely location of donations. Eventually, a copy of the donor certificate book was obtained which suggested that the last donation was given in 1979 (as there were no certificates after this date). The second case was reported to have been a donor in 1976. No donor records have been located.

These two cases have raised the question of a "cut off date" for donor lookbacks. It is proposed that the earliest date for donors lookbacks should be 1980 for the following reasons:

- The earliest case of BSE to be confirmed by the CPU was June 1987.
- Allowing a couple of years for missed reporting, it is unlikely that any member of the UK population was exposed to BSE through diet before the early 1980s.
- The CJD Incident Panel, in its consultation paper "Management of Possible Exposure to CJD Through Medical Procedures" has used 1980 as its cut off date for the earliest time that patients could start to incubate the disease (paragraph 2.73).
- The location of donor records is only the first step in a chain of actions. Once donor records have been located, the relevant donation records must be examined and the issue records located in order to establish the fate of the donations. The next step will be to contact the hospitals who received the components. In many cases, issue records and/or hospital records are not available pre 1980 (and in some cases later than this date).
- Donor records are traced so that the relevant recipients can be identified, with a view to notification and the possibility of testing and/or therapy in the future. On scientific grounds, there would be no reason to wish to identify recipients who had been transfused prior to 1980, as there is no evidence that BSE, let alone vCJD, was present in the UK pre 1980. Furthermore, the significant resources being expended to identify donor records pre 1980 could be better used on more worthwhile work.

It is therefore proposed that donor lookbacks for vCJD notifications should not be actioned if the donations were given prior to 1980. If there is doubt over the exact date of the donations, centre staff will be asked only to examine records from 1980 onwards.

The Blood and Tissues Safety Assurance Group is asked to endorse this proposal. If the Group agrees, Professor Bob Will (CJDSU) will be formerly notified of this decision.