

- 1) Mr Murray *gjh* 2. 20
 2) Mr Thomson
 3) File (NRH 123/1 & NQS/10/1)

MATERIAL FOR PMO REPORT

1. Blood Transfusion and AIDS (Dr Forrester)

Recipients of fractionated blood products are now triply protected against infection with HIV. Donors likely to convey infection are warned off and are able to secure HIV antibody testing on request away from blood donor sessions. All donations are tested for antibody. All products are heat-treated. None of these three tiers of protection is in itself totally secure, but since they were put in place, no recipient is known to have been infected by a fractionated blood product.

Blood cells cannot undergo heat treatment, and so their recipients have two tiers of protection only. There is thus a very small but definite risk, of the order of 1 per million, that cell products (including whole blood) will convey infection. Scotland acquires a million donations in a little more than 3 years, and thus may see occasional transmission of infection. People expecting to receive blood at elective operations are likely to press for the opportunity to provide their own blood in advance ("autologous transfusion"), thus escaping AIDS and other risks.

2. Blood Transfusion and non-A, non-B Hepatitis (Dr Forrester)

This "hepatitis" is a residual rag-bag when Hepatitis B and Hepatitis A are excluded, and consequently no specific test can detect it. It is relatively benign. But U.S. blood banks have noted that the combination of a liver function test and a test for the core (not the surface) antigen of Hepatitis B distinguishes perhaps a third of blood donations which would convey non-A, non-B "Hepatitis" and allows them to be excluded. Exclusion is far from complete, and besides, some 2% of "innocent" donations may also be excluded.

Nevertheless, U.S. blood banks are evidently about to adopt this pair of tests and shoulder the expense. Here, it is intended instead to enquire into the number of relevant donations and the characteristics of the donors, before taking any further step.

3. The Scottish Development Agency (Dr Forrester) last summer conducted a series of meetings with American consultants, to obtain advice on the Scottish Health Care industry and how it might more successfully serve international markets - especially, though not exclusively, the American market. Analysis of the industry has now led to the singling out of 5 fields for particular encouragement by SDA: drug delivery (eg gradual release of drugs made up in gels), feline leukaemia (in the interest of cat health but also because retroviruses are of recognised relevance to human AIDS), medical laser applications, biosensors (which can continuously monitor blood sugar, for example) and biotechnology (such as the use of monoclonal antibodies as tumour markers).

pp. J.R.d

DR J M FORRESTER
 26 January 1987