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Dr McIntyre

Copy to: ✓ Dr Forrester

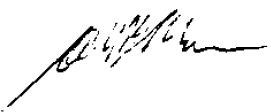
NON-A NON-B HEPATITIS SCREENING OF BLOOD DONATIONS

I refer to Dr Forrester's minute to you of 14 April.

Drs Gillon and McClelland were written to on 19 November last informing them that the Biomedical Research Committee had recommended that their proposal for a study of Alanine Amino-Transferase (ALA) and Hepatitis B Core Antibody (Anti-HBc) Screening of Blood Donations: A Multi-Centre Study should not be supported.

Dr Forrester is wrong in his statement that DHSS Research Management Division is releasing £75,000 to fund the English component of this study. Their RMD had reservations on whether this study design could achieve its stated objectives. The relevant DHSS policy division, however, appears to have taken the view that such considerations required to be set aside since the study would at least provide some limited information about the prevalence of some aspects of the study. The funding is to be provided from a policy resource and not the research budget, although Dr Metters has told me that there is the possibility that RMD might be asked to "manage" the project.

In a recent telephone conversation Dr Metters told me that his DHSS colleagues with policy interests feel particularly vulnerable since they are aware that there is some Scottish data on the prevalence of this problem as a result of the study CSO funded a few years ago whereas there is no comparable data relating to England and Wales. He also felt that a substantial part of his policy colleagues' interests in funding this "research" study was that it would allow them to "play for time" in the hope that instead of ALT a more suitable screening assay could be found which would act as a marker for Non-A Non-B Hepatitis.



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15 April 1988
Room 240
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