

Dr Forrester - File K/MRS/50/C321

SCOTTISH PARTICIPATION IN UK RESEARCH PROJECT ON  
TRANSFUSION-ASSOCIATED NON-A, NON-B HEPATITIS

I refer to your minute of 10 February.

I am aware of much of the evidence from the USA which suggested that identifying blood with high alanine amino-transferase levels (ALT or SGPT) might screen out agents causing Non-A, Non-B Hepatitis.

I have very strong reservations against proceeding as you suggest about passively providing support for a research project involving one Scottish Transfusion Centre if DHSS decide to support a project at 3 centres. While you have not given any definitive protocol you suggest that 12,000 donor samples would be screened, however, I am unclear whether this represents the input from a single transfusion centre or the total from all 4.

My reason for antipathy to your suggestion is that CSO funded a project over a 3 year period which looked at this particular topic, and indeed other tests related to hepatitis, in a series of samples ranging from 10,500 to nearly 13,000, depending on the test under consideration. The report of this study by Drs Follett and Dow was made available more than 2 years ago and is attached to this minute. It would seem to me that what you are proposing would merely repeat a study we have already carried out in Scotland. If you feel it helpful I would be prepared to transmit the results of our Scottish study to colleagues in DHSS Research Management Division, but unfortunately you have not identified for me who within that office will be dealing with this particular proposal. If the SNBTS wish to formulate a research proposal on this topic for funding from CSO then I think there is little doubt that it should be submitted as an application for formal review by the Biomedical Research Committee.

I suggest that we discuss the topic briefly in-office so that you can tell me the extent to which you would wish to be involved in any liaison with colleagues in DHSS Research Management Division and whether you would wish to send, or have Dr Forbes send, notes of guidance and BRC application forms to anyone in the SNBTS.



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17 February 1987  
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