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HEALTH CIRCULAR

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

To:
 Regional Health Authorities)
 Family Practitioner Committees) for action

Area Health Authorities)
 Boards of Governors) for information

February 1976

HEALTH SERVICES DEVELOPMENT
 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CARE OF PERSONS SUFFERING FROM HAEMOPHILIA AND
 RELATED CONDITIONS

Summary

This circular encloses a memorandum which sets out revised arrangements for the care of persons suffering from haemophilia and related conditions; lays down revised criteria for the designation of haemophilia centres; and asks Regional Health Authorities to review, in the light of these criteria, centres at which treatment is at present available to patients.

1. On 5 March 1968 a memorandum was circulated to hospital authorities, under cover of HM(68)8, listing centres which had been designated for the diagnosis, treatment and registration of persons suffering from haemophilia and related conditions and describing the functions of these centres. Following a review, which was carried out in consultation with the Directors of the present Haemophilia Centres, some alterations to the existing arrangements have been worked out and agreed and these are incorporated in the revised memorandum attached as Appendix 2.

Criteria for Designation as Haemophilia Centres

2. To qualify for designation, Haemophilia Centres must be able to provide clinical treatment to patients at short notice at any time of the day or night and be capable of undertaking assays of specific coagulation factors as part of their diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. With the introduction of new therapeutic agents the prospects of haemophiliacs reaching active adulthood have considerably improved and Haemophilia Centres should therefore be able to provide a wider advisory service than hitherto to haemophiliacs and their families particularly in the fields of preventive medicine and dentistry, education, employment, genetic counselling and social medicine.

Associate Centres

3. Centres which were designated in 1968 but which do not fully meet the new criteria may nevertheless, to avoid inconvenience to patients already registered with them who live or work nearby, continue to be recognised for the purpose of giving emergency treatment. These centres will be known as Associate Centres. Each will be linked with a convenient designated Haemophilia Centre so that together they will be in a position to offer patients a full therapeutic, diagnostic and advisory service.

Reference Centres

4. The introduction of new therapeutic agents, accompanied by the growth in experience of the treatment of haemophiliacs, has led to changes in the role of the three centres which were designated in 1968 as Special Treatment Centres. Although it is no longer necessary to refer the majority of patients to them for surgery these Centres, and a few others, have during recent years developed an advisory role towards individual Haemophilia Centres, and it has been decided that this role could usefully be officially recognised and further developed by designating them as Reference Centres and describing in some detail their functions.

Other facilities in the United Kingdom

5. As it is important that patients and Directors of Haemophilia Centres should be aware where treatment for haemophilia is available in the United Kingdom, haemophilia centres in Wales and Northern Ireland and regional haemophilia centres in Scotland have, with the agreement of the Welsh Office, the Department of Health and Social Services, Northern Ireland and the Scottish Home and Health Department respectively, also been included in the list of centres in England (attached as Appendix 1). The organisation of haemophilia centres in Scotland differs from that in the rest of the United Kingdom in that each centre provides the whole range of services for its area.

Action

6. Regional Health Authorities are asked to review, in consultation with the appropriate Reference Centre, the list of centres in England at which treatment is available to patients in the light of paragraphs 2 and 3 above and to inform the Department by 30 April 1976 which Centres are to be designated as Haemophilia Centres and which are to be known as Associate Centres.

7. Family Practitioner Committees are asked to send a copy of the attached FPN and Appendix 1 for information to all general medical and dental practitioners on their lists and to the Local Medical and Dental Committees. Enough copies are being sent separately.

8. The Department (HS2B) will continue to supply the Special Medical Card (Haemorrhagic States) and the booklet "Notes on the care of patients with hereditary haemorrhagic disorders".

From:

HS2B Division
Hannibal House
Elephant and Castle
London SE1 6TE

01-703 6380 Ext 411

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