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## SCOTTISH HOME AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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IN CONFIDENCE

13 November 1987

Dr M Smith  
Office of the Chief Scientist  
Department of Health and Social  
Security  
Alexander Fleming House  
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LONDON  
SE1 6BY

Dear Marguerite

ALANINE AMINO-TRANSFARASE (ALT) AND HEPATITIS B CORE  
ANTIBODY (ANTI-HBc) SCREENING OF BLOOD DONATIONS: A  
MULTI-CENTRE STUDY

Further to our telephone discussion, I confirm that the Biomedical Research Committee assessed the above project from Drs Gillon and McClelland and decided that it should not be supported. It was therefore given the lowest banding of our assessment system (C). In making their recommendation the Committee, while accepting that more information was needed about Scottish blood donors in this context, agreed that this application was fundamentally flawed. It was further stated that it was obvious that the authors did not understand the current literature or the very platform on which the application rested.

I further invited our two lead speakers on this project, [REDACTED] and Professor A J Hedley, Department of Community Medicine, Glasgow, to give written comments. As discussed with you I attach photocopies of these documents. In this connection I must underline the confidentiality of these reports and stress that they cannot be attributed nor used outwith DHSS. I am sure that you understand our difficulties in this very sensitive area.

Dr Graveney and I agreed that we would use the same three referees in all applications pertaining to this area of research and to that end I confirm that the referees were Professor C du V Florey, Dr J C Coleman and Dr G C Schild. Charles Florey gave a structured criticism, supporting the application but with qualifications. Drs Coleman and Schild were supportive but gave no detailed criticisms. It is likely that you will have received the same responses.

In conclusion the Biomedical Research Committee, after much deliberation took the view that this project should not be supported and in view of the fact that it was deemed fundamentally flawed, the applicants should not be allowed to resubmit.

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I hope the above will be of help to you in coming to a decision on the merits of similar or identical proposals from other centres. I would be grateful if you would inform me of the outcome of your own discussions as your decisions will have service implications for both our Departments.

Yours sincerely

*Bill Forbes.*

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