

Extract from *The Guardian*

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# Aids 'not imported in blood'

By Andrew Veitch,  
Medical Correspondent

Fears that more haemophiliacs may contract Aids from contaminated US supplies of the blood clotting agent Factor VIII will be calmed at least temporarily, today.

American Factor VIII appears to be no more dangerous than the Scottish version, according to researchers at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, who have tested 19 Scottish haemophiliacs.

But surprisingly the two versions produced blood abnormalities similar to those seen in Aids victims — they both affected the patients' immune systems, the defences against infection which are destroyed by Aids.

The researchers found no evidence that a virus was responsible for the immune deficiency.

Contaminated American Factor VIII has been implicated in the death from Aids of a haemophiliac in Bristol and a Cardiff haemophiliac now has the disease. Doctors in Manchester are monitoring patients given Factor VIII from the same batch.

The Scottish results are reported by Dr Karin Froebel and her colleagues in today's British Medical Journal. All but two of the haemophiliacs had received American Factor VIII in the past six years, but only five had been given it in the past two years.

Five showed the specific abnormalities seen in Aids: a reduced number of lymphocytes called T helper cells, and an increased number of lymphocytes called T suppressors. Two of these men were practising homosexuals.

Meanwhile three independent reports from the US, published in the Lancet today implicate the hepatitis B virus as a cause of Aids. If they are right, one points out, a means of prevention may be at hand—the new hepatitis B vaccine which has already been given to 200,000 people in the States.