

**SCOTTISH HOME AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

St Andrew's House Edinburgh EH1 3DE

Telephone 031-556 8501 ext

1 October 1985

Dear Doctor

**ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)
INTRODUCTION OF A TEST FOR HTLV III ANTIBODY**

I wrote to you on 17 May enclosing a paper "AIDS - General Information for Doctors". I now enclose information about the introduction of a test for antibody to HTLV III (AIDS: Booklet 2).

From a date in mid October to be announced, all blood donations will be screened for HTLV III antibody by Regional Transfusion Centres.

At the same time alternative facilities will be provided for antibody tests, on a confidential basis, of people who believe themselves to be at risk. Your Health Board will inform you of local arrangements.

The synchronous provision of these arrangements is to ensure that people who believe themselves at risk of infection do not offer to donate blood in order to be tested. This is crucial because even a reliable test cannot detect very early infections to which an antibody response has not yet been generated.

It is essential that all individuals who are found to have positive antibody tests receive counselling in order that they may understand the meaning of the results and the measures required to avoid transmitting the infection to others. Health Boards have been asked to provide counselling services, and such services will also be available at the Regional Transfusion Centres for blood donors found to be seropositive. A brief summary of guidance for patients with AIDS and their families and friends, and also for individuals with a positive antibody test, is attached at appendix 2.

The antibody test is an important tool in the control of the spread of HTLV III infection. If it is to be used effectively, very strict confidentiality must be maintained in respect of positive results.

Any queries relating to this letter should be directed to Dr R G Covell, Room 2, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh (031-556-8501 ext 2532).

Yours sincerely

JOHN REID
Chief Medical Officer

Enc

13A00505.095