

JK/6

Reference.....

28

Mr J B Brown
MB2

USE OF BLOOD FROM PRISONS

1. I am replying on behalf of Mr Parker to your minute to him of 27 July.
2. It is difficult to advise any particular Departmental policy on the collection of blood from borstals and prisons at the moment. It is for individual Regional Transfusion Directors to determine how and from where donations are sought in the light of the targets they need to achieve and the numbers of donors on their panels.
3. However, Transfusion Directors have been aware of the dangers of relying too heavily on prisons as a source of donations for some time ie prior to the advent of AIDS as a cause of concern, because of the risk of hepatitis in prisons, (also connected with the higher incidence of homosexuality) which can be spread through blood transfusion. Nevertheless, although most Regions, especially those with no shortage of donors, may not need to use prisons, there is at least one which has to view them as a major source of donations in order to meet targets.
4. AIDS has now of course called the wisdom of continuing to view prisons as a source of blood even further into question, and the Directors are due to discuss it at their next meeting in September. If the risks are now considered too great to justify continued collection from prisons, some measures will be needed to compensate for the loss of that source of donors, perhaps, for example, a system whereby Regions with no need to rely on prisons can take extra blood to be transferred to those Regions for whom the loss of prisons as a source of blood will cause difficulties.
5. I shall of course advise you of any developments which occur. I gather that this problem has been debated by Transfusion Directors in Scotland, but no particular policy line emerged. We shall obviously need to liaise closely with Home Office also since they have in the past been very much in favour of blood donation by prisoners.



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23 August 1983

cc: Mr Parker
Mr Hale
Mr Griffin
Dr Holgate
Dr Walford
Mr Chambers
Miss O'Carroll
Mr McBryde (SHHD) *sub 26/8/83*