



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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BP's Fine

5 June 1990

Dear Dr Perry

## ACVSB MEETING

You will recall, at the last ACVSB meeting it was agreed that a sub group should be set up to prepare a protocol for a study to investigate the significance of positive findings using the ELISA hepatitis C antibody screening tests.

This group comprising Drs Gunson, Mitchell, Mortimer and Tedder met on 23 May together with Departmental officials and considered that in the light of subsequent developments, an extended study of RIBA and PCR techniques might not be appropriate. As you will be aware, some additional scientific information is now available and FDA have approved the hepatitis C antibody test.

In the changed circumstances I think it would be prudent to bring forward the next meeting of the ACVSB to 2 July as, as I feel the Committee need to consider further whether UK blood donations should be routinely screened for hepatitis C antibody. I appreciate the difficulties in making time available for meetings at short notice. However, I hope as many as possible will be able to attend in view of the importance of the issue to be discussed.

This special meeting will be devoted entirely to hepatitis C screening. I outline in the Annex specific questions which I believe we will need to address when formulating our advice to Ministers. If there are others which you think also need to be considered, please let me know as soon as possible, or if time does not permit, you will be very welcome to raise them at the meeting.

It would be helpful if those of you preparing the protocol (Q3) and the UKBTS action chart (Q4) could make them available for circulation by the Secretariat prior to the meeting.

I apologise for the short notice of this meeting but events are now moving fast, and strongly indicate that we should consider again at an early date our advice to Ministers on hepatitis C testing. I am sure you will make every effort to attend, as it is important to have as many members as possible present. The draft minutes of our last meeting will be sent to you shortly.

Yours sincerely

J S METTERS  
 Deputy Chief Medical Officer

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