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ACTION ON AIDS

I refer to a letter to you from [REDACTED] of CBSC on 9 May (of which I was shown a copy) recommending that American FVIII concentrate should be withdrawn from use because of the risk of transmitting AIDS.

In my view this suggestion is premature in relation to the evidence and unbalanced in that it does not take into account the risks to haemophiliacs of withdrawing a major source of their FVIII supplies.

Perhaps the situation is best put in perspective by a statement which was drafted to appear in the minutes of the meeting of the Directors of Haemophilia Reference Centres which I attended today:

"Many Directors have until now restricted their use of FVIII in young children (under the age of 4 years) and in mild haemophiliacs to NHS materials and we consider that it would be circumspect to continue with that policy.

There is not sufficient evidence to restrict the use of imported FVIII concentrates in other patients in view of the benefits of the treatment but the situation will be kept continuously under review by means of a surveillance system which has been instituted and by means of regular meetings of the Reference Centre Directors.

The Directors welcome the fact that the Regional Transfusion Directors would be meeting to consider steps which could be taken to avoid bleeding donors who might be in a category thought capable of transmitting AIDS." (NB: this statement is not for publication until the minutes have been formally circulated; the wording may not be precisely that of the final form.)

With regard to the Working Party on AIDS which [REDACTED] has proposed, I suggest that Prof. [REDACTED] also be invited to represent haemophilia centre directors.

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13 May 1983

cc [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]