

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (83) 8

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES
ON PREVENTING THE POSSIBLE TRANSMISSION
OF ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)
FROM AFFECTED BLOOD DONORS TO PATIENTS RECEIVING BLOOD
OR BLOOD PRODUCTS

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 23 June 1983
at the 361st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members and that this aim may be pursued, *inter alia*, by the adoption of common regulations in the health field ;

Considering the growing importance of a new and severe health hazard, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), that may be caused by an infectious agent transmissible by blood and blood products ;

Recalling the basic principles to minimise the hazard of transmissible infectious diseases by blood or blood products drawn up in the context of the work of the Committee of Experts on Blood Transfusion and Immunohaematology :

1. to expose the recipient to a minimum number of donations of blood when the transfusion is of cellular and coagulation factor products,
2. to achieve national self-sufficiency in the production of coagulation factor products from voluntary, non-remunerated donors,
3. to avoid the importation of blood plasma and coagulation factor products from countries with risk populations and from paid donors ;

Recalling Recommendation No. R (80) 5 concerning blood products for the treatment of haemophiliacs, with special reference to Section II of the operative part, and Recommendation No. R (81) 14 on preventing the transmission of infectious diseases in the international transfer of blood, its components and derivatives ;

Recognising the necessity to provide pertinent information to blood donors, attending physicians and selected recipient groups in order to avoid, as far as possible, donations by persons in risk groups, without inappropriate discrimination and emotive over-reaction amongst recipients,

Recommends the governments of member states :

I. to take all necessary steps and measures with respect to the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and in particular :

— to avoid wherever possible the use of coagulation factor products prepared from large plasma pools ; this is especially important for those countries where self-sufficiency in the production of such products has not yet been achieved ;

— to inform attending physicians and selected recipients, such as haemophiliacs, of the potential health hazards of haemotherapy and the possibilities of minimising these risks ;

— to provide all blood donors with information on the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome so that those in risk groups will refrain from donating (an example of an information leaflet for donors is appended) ;

II. to pursue rapid and full implementation of Recommendations No. R (80) 5 and No. R (81) 14.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (83) 8

The present information leaflet for donors has been prepared and is used by the American Red Cross ; it is given as an example for the convenience of National Blood Transfusion Services wishing to draw up their own information leaflet

An important message to all blood donors

This information is distributed to all potential blood donors to help prevent the spreading of certain illnesses from donors to patients by blood transfusions.

Please read this statement, and if you think that there is a risk that your blood could cause illness in a patient who might receive it, please refrain from donating blood at this time.

What are these illnesses ?

Some persons may feel in excellent health but have viruses or other infectious agents in their blood that could cause illness in persons receiving a transfusion of their blood. If you think any of the following information pertains to you, please do not donate blood today :

1. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

This newly described illness of unknown cause is believed to be spread by intimate personal contact and possibly by blood transfusion. Persons with AIDS have reduced defences against disease and as a result may develop infections such as pneumonia, or other serious illnesses. At this time there is no laboratory test to detect all persons with AIDS. Therefore we must rely on blood donors' health histories to exclude individuals whose blood might transmit AIDS to patients who will receive that blood.

The Office of Biologics of the Food and Drug Administration has identified groups at an increased risk of developing AIDS. These groups are :

— persons with symptoms and signs suggestive of AIDS. These include severe night sweats, unexplained fevers, unexpected weight loss, lymphadenopathy (swollen glands) or Kaposi's Sarcoma (a rare cancer) ;

— sexually active homosexual or bisexual men with multiple partners ;

— recent Haitian entrants into the United States ;

— present or past abusers of intravenous drugs ;

— sexual partners of persons at increased risk of AIDS.

2. *Hepatitis*

Persons with a past history of viral hepatitis are deferred permanently. Intimate contact with someone suffering from viral hepatitis requires deferral for six months.

3. *Syphilis*

Potential blood donors with active syphilis are deferred.

4. *Malaria*

Potential blood donors who have visited countries where malaria exists are deferred for six months after leaving the malarious area or, if anti-malarial drugs were taken, for three years after cessation of this drug therapy. Natives from countries where malaria exists are deferred for three years ; Haiti is one of these countries.

What should I do ?

If you believe that you may be carrying one of the above-mentioned illnesses, or if you are an individual in a group at increased risk of developing AIDS, we ask that you refrain from donating blood at this time. You may leave now without providing an explanation. Or, if you prefer, you may proceed to be deferred confidentially, without further questioning, by the health history interviewer.

If you would like additional information, Red Cross nurses and physicians will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.