



Superior Health Council

Rue de l' Autonomie 4
1070 BRUSSELS

Advisory report on the risk of blood transfusion transmitted vCJD (SHC 8048-4)

(Validated by the Transitional Board on June 8th, 2005)

I. Request:

This advisory report is a revised version of SHC advisory report No. 8048, which bears the following characteristics (reference a):

During the meeting of January 22nd (the minutes of which were approved on April 1st, 2004), all experts involved in the activities of the permanent working group « Blood and bone marrow » considered it necessary and useful to pro-actively draw your attention to their concerns about the issue of vCJD transmission through blood transfusion.

During their meeting of May 19th, 2005, the working group “Blood and blood products” approved a change made in SHC advisory report No. 8048. In addition, this advisory report recommends the “universal leucodepletion of all blood products”. In European terminology, the term “blood products” refers to products derived from blood components. This is confusing, as it creates the impression that the recommendation made in advisory report No. 8048 no longer concerns blood components, despite the fact that this was its original objective. On the other hand, the members of the working group feel that, at least in this context, it is not necessary to recommend proceeding to the leucodepletion of plasma derivatives. The provisional advisory report of the members of the working group “Blood and blood products” was validated by the SHC board on June 8th, 2005.

II. Advice:

Great Britain was recently faced with a case of vCJD that was possibly caused by a transfusion. This patient, who shows clearly identifiable symptoms, had to undergo a transfusion at an earlier stage of his life. One of the blood donors contracted the disease a few years after the donation. He has passed away.

At present, any person having resided in Great Britain for a total period of 6 months between 1980 and 1996 is excluded from donating blood in Belgium. Also, only some of the blood products undergo leucodepletion.

Finally, the working group « Blood and blood products » of the SHC suggests that the Minister:

- **recommend the universal leucodepletion of all blood components (red blood cells, platelets and plasma for transfusion).**
- **devote the necessary staff and means to setting up the « risk assessment » for transfused patients (thanks to the data obtained from the VAR)**
- **consistently take the precautionary measures that the British had recourse to.**

III. Composition of the working group that was involved in drawing up this advisory report:

- Baele Philippe
- Bontez Walter
- Cras Patrick
- Desmyter Jan
- Dobbelaer Roland
- Ferrant Augustinus
- Goubau Patrick
- Lambermont Micheline
- Latinne Dominique
- Plum Jean
- Muylle Ludo
- Sondag-Thull Danièle
- Steenssens Laurette
- Thomas Isabelle
- Van Ranst Marc
- Voets Ellen

The working group was chaired by Mrs. D. SONDAG-THULL D. and the scientific secretariat was carried out by Mr. R. HÜBNER.

IV. References:

- a) « *Avis au sujet du risque de transmission de vCJD lors de transfusion sanguine* », SHC No. 8048.
