

MA GENDER, CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

**BLOOD FLOWS NOT JUST THROUGH OUR VEINS BUT
THROUGH OUR MINDS. HOW HAS THE GLOBAL
POLITICS OF BLOOD IMPACTED ON THE UK
HAEMOPHILIA COMMUNITY?**

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ABSTRACT

Many haemophiliacs were infected with HIV and hepatitis viruses during the 1970s and 1980s following treatment with plasma products in NHS hospitals. This dissertation investigates the politics of the global blood trade by examining blood policy documents from the 1960s to the present day and analyses the impact of these policies on the UK haemophilia community. The study critiques the findings of a Government report (Self-Sufficiency In Blood Products In England And Wales: A Chronology From 1973 To 1991, Department Of Health, 2006) which claimed that the benefits of importing US treatment products manufactured from the plasma of remunerated prison and “skid-row” donors outweighed the viral risks to patients. A textual analysis of material originating from the Department Of Health and other organisations examines the Government’s failure to achieve self-sufficiency in the manufacture of UK blood products. The anthropological inquiry explores how decisions made by institutions nationally and internationally continue to affect haemophiliacs and their families to this day. The investigation highlights the ethical problems that can arise when blood becomes a commodity and profit is prioritised over safety and how this is interpreted by those at the receiving end of contaminated treatment. Key themes were identified by examining the replies from questionnaires sent out to haemophiliacs and their partners and illustrate the way in which they have adapted to their current situation. The report concludes that research participants have re-evaluated their personal identity and revised their collective response as an infected “subculture” within society to challenge the power of the institutions they deem responsible for the demise of their community. This study

recommends that the Government commissions a full and open independent public inquiry into how patients came to be infected through their NHS treatment.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BMJ	British Medical Journal
BPL	Blood Products Laboratory (now known as Bio Products Laboratory)
CDC	Centre For Disease Control, Atlanta, United States
DHSS	Department Of Health And Social Security (now the DOH)
DOH	Department Of Health
FDA	Food And Drug Administration
FOI	Freedom Of Information (Act)
GP	General Practitioner
HAA	Australian Antigen Testing
HbsAg	Hepatitis B positive
HCV	Hepatitis C Virus
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JAMA	Journal American Medical Association
MD	Medical Doctor
NANB	Non A Non B Hepatitis
NHS	National Health Service
PHLS	Public Health Laboratory Service, England
SSR	Self-Sufficiency In Blood Products In England And Wales: A Chronology From 1973 To 1991 (Department Of Health, 2006)
UK	United Kingdom
UKHCDO	United Kingdom Haemophilia Centre Directors Organisation

US United States
vCJD variant Creutzfeldt- Jacob Disease
WHO World Health Organisation

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