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Implementation: To be determined by each Service

Change Notification UK National Blood Services No. 32 - 2009

Acupuncture

Applies to the Whole Blood and Components Donor Selection Guidelines only

Obligatory

Must not donate if:

The condition for which treatment was given is not acceptable.

Less than 12 months from completing treatment.

Discretionary

Performed within the NHS

If performed by a suitably qualified NHS healthcare professional on NHS premises, accept.

Performed outside of the NHS

If performed by a Qualified Health Care Professional registered with the General Medical Council (GMC), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), General Dental Council (GDC), The General Chiropractic Council (GCC), The General Optical Council (GOC), The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) or The Health Professions Council (HPC) (which regulates: Arts therapists, Biomedical Scientists, Chiropodists/ Podiatrists, Clinical Scientists, Dieticians, Occupational Therapists, Operating Department Practitioners, Orthoptists, Paramedics, Physiotherapists, Prosthetists and Orthotists, Radiographers, Speech and Language Therapists), accept.

If none of the above applies and, after four months, a validated test for hepatitis B core antibody is negative, accept.

Additional Information

Acupuncture needles that have been reused have passed infection from person to person. Acupuncturists who are subject to discipline from statutorily constituted professional authorities are unlikely to re-use needles.

This guidance presumes that a validated NAT test for hepatitis C is negative, if this test is stopped for any reason the guidance will change.

During the recovery phase of HBV infection levels of free HBsAg may be too low to detect. Antibody to hepatitis B core antigen may be the only indicator of infectivity.

When there is any doubt about infection being passed on, waiting twelve months means infections are more likely to be picked up by the tests used by the blood services.



Reason for Change

JPAC considers statutory registration of practitioners to afford the best overall guarantee that blood donated by acupuncture patients is safe. In the absence of statutory regulation of acupuncture, there is currently no single body to which all acupuncturists are accredited, and so to continue with the approval of one or more organisations would necessarily mean that others of possibly equal merit were excluded from approval. Voluntary registration with a non-statutory body cannot provide assurance as to how high the standards of an organisation's members are or how diligent the non-statutory regulator is in enforcing them or the practitioner in applying them. Practitioners who choose not to join a voluntary register are still able to practise legally and to use the relevant title, as will a practitioner who has been removed from the register by the registering body. There is no way of policing the enforcement by voluntary associations of the standards they require of their members as the organisations are not subject to supervision by the Council for Regulatory Healthcare Excellence (CHRE). Nor is there currently any external, independent consideration of "fitness to practise" cases referred to voluntary regulators. While statutory regulation cannot guarantee the absence of risk, its primary aim is to deliver enhanced patient safety and public protection. Statutory "protection of title" means that donor centres can safely assume that a person who practises in the name of the registered profession is actually registered.

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