

## Sun Newspaper Report Slams Blood Lab Over Poor Hygiene Standards

A report in today's Sun claims that the leading NHS blood processing laboratory has been threatened with closure because poor hygiene standards pose a danger to patients.

The laboratory threatened with closure is the government-owned Bio Products laboratory in Elstree, Hertfordshire. A report by the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency is claimed to list 90 'major failures' at the site.

The faults include dirty work surfaces, oil from machinery dripping on areas where blood products are made and the use of incorrect volumes and measures for products – which would result in patients potentially being given a dangerous dose.

The report claims that paint was peeling off ceilings on to work areas, some equipment was only cleaned twice a year and walls were streaked with dirty water. Cracked paint and debris were also found in sterile areas.

Bio Products is said to process plasma used in blood products which treat more than 10,000 patients each year, including haemophiliacs.

The Sun claims the 'secret' report follows an inspection in September, and orders the laboratory to put right the faults or face closure.

An MHRA spokesman admitted to the newspaper: "The inspectors found the site did not meet MHRA's standards of accepted good practice. There was no evidence found that the product quality had been breached.

"However, corrective action of these site facilities and certain manufacturing methods were required.

"Due to the MHRA's concern, the company's chief executive officer was informed and a written commitment has been made from him to rectify the problems identified."

Laurence Vick is head of clinical negligence at Michelmores and represents the firm's haemophilia and other clients in their legal actions against the American pharmaceutical companies alleging that they contracted HIV and Hepatitis C after receiving contaminated blood products supplied to the NHS in the 70's and 80's.

"It's scarcely credible that such alleged bad practice is still going on, given the huge furore surrounding the previous contaminated blood scandal and the allegations made against health officials.

"Perhaps most alarming is the fact that the MHRA have seen to keep the report under wraps, whilst presumably the laboratory tries to find a way out of the mess. It has the same unpleasant smell about it as the original debacle, and if the Sun has played a part in exposing dangerous practices they are to be congratulated."

Meanwhile, Bio Products refused to comment on the allegations.

Laurence Vick was named The Times 'Lawyer of the Week' for his willingness to challenge the Department of Health over the haemophiliac contaminated blood claims.

"Top NHS lab is bloody filthy"

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