

PE1448/U

Chief Medical Officer and Public Health Directorate

Pamela Niven

T: 0131-244 -2343

E: pamela.niven@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Mr David Stewart MSP
Convener
Public Petitions Committee
T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



22 July 2013

Dear Mr Stewart

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1448: IMPROVING AWARENESS OF THE CANCER RISKS IN ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION

Thank you for your clerk's letter of 25 June 2013 requesting further information on the above mentioned petition.

The petitioner has asked what more can be done to make sure that all clinicians are aware of the potential risks of malignancy related to post transplant immunosuppression medications.

As stated in the Minister's response to you in January 2013, *"There is clearly a separate issue about awareness across the wider NHS of the potential long term health effects following transplantation. We would expect that those professionals closely involved in transplantation would be aware of the potential risks but that is not necessarily the case for other clinicians"*.

Transplant remains a relatively rare occurrence in Scotland i.e. 359 transplants were undertaken in 2012/13. As a result, many health professionals will never come across a transplant recipient during their professional career. It would therefore be extremely difficult to ensure all health professionals are aware of the risks of the immunosuppression/malignancy link and that their knowledge remains current. The Scottish Transplant Group did consider this matter but agreed that the most appropriate and proportionate approach was to ensure that transplant clinicians and transplant recipients themselves are aware of the potential risks and any health concerns are quickly investigated.

As you are aware, as a result of this petition, all transplant units now issue the British Association of Dermatologists patient information leaflet prior to discharge from hospital and advice on skin care post-transplant is reinforced as part of the annual review, in addition to a skin check being undertaken by an appropriately trained member of staff. Implementing these actions will have raised awareness of this issue, not only with healthcare professionals but also with transplant recipients.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Niven
Programme Manager – Organ Donation and Transplantation