Syphilis in blood donors UK, 2016

1940s
Donation screening began

Detected any stage of infection, even after treatment
Positive donations discarded

Cold storage destroys syphilis spirochaetes
Potential risk in platelets stored at 22°C
No reported transfusion transmitted syphilis in the UK since the 1950’s

Recent syphilis increased in blood donors

2016 highest number of syphilis diagnoses in the general population since 1949

Blood donation rules select for low risk of infection 2012-2016
Wait 12 months after:
- Sex between men
- Sex with high risk partner

2016
HIV
HTLV
Hepatitis C
Hepatitis B
Syphilis

Infection acquired >12 months ago
42
< 12m recent syphilis infection
30

Number of blood donors with recent syphilis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Sex between men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Females: SBMW
Males: SBMW
Sex between men: SBMW

Total number
New partners
Met donation rules

Syphilis testing identifies donors at higher risk of acquiring other infections through sex

Data sources: Public Health England and data supplied to the NHSBT/PHE Epidemiology Unit by NHSBT, WBS, SNBTS and NIBTS.

PHE publications gateway number: 2017354
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