

Report says Britain knew of blood risks

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Documents obtained by the BBC suggest British authorities ignored warnings about the risk of contaminated blood in the 1970s and 1980s.

BBC's Newsnight said Tuesday it had obtained a letter from the head of Britain's public health surveillance center in 1983 that called for a ban on blood from the United States, where many of the donors could sell their blood without adequate health checks.

The London Telegraph said more than 4,500 people with hemophilia were infected with HIV and hepatitis C during that time.

The Hemophilia Society said 1,757 of those people have died and many others "are terminally ill, unemployable and unable to make adequate provision for their dependants."

Patients infected by the contaminated blood testified Wednesday at an independent inquiry into the treatment of thousands of hemophiliacs.

The Times of London said the British government refused to compensate victims infected with HIV in the 1980s, but finally agreed to an out-of-court settlement in 1990.

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