

Medical Authorities - Blood Supply

Canadian, Australian and British Governments Banned ME/CFS Patients from Donating Blood

The Canadian, Australian and British governments have all banned ME/CFS patients from donating blood. We, the Think Tank panel of ESME, applaud their actions and believe that a similar ban should be issued in all European countries.

ME/CFS patients should be banned from donating blood for two reasons. The first is to protect the patients: ME/CFS causes a large range of symptoms which could be made worse by donating blood. The second reason is to ensure the safety of the blood supply. The causes of ME/CFS are not fully understood, but it has recently been connected to a new retrovirus: XMRV.

A study from the Whittemore Peterson Institute detected the XMRV retrovirus in over 95% of the more than 200 ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia and atypical MS patients tested. XMRV closely resembles the HIV virus and is thought to be transmitted in similar ways - through bodily fluids such as blood, semen, and breast milk.

Until the connection between XMRV and ME/CFS is fully understood, it is advisable to prohibit blood donations from these patients.