# Demand for Hepatitis C Tests Surges as Undiagnosed Victims of Blood Transfusion Scandal Emerges



The demand for hepatitis C tests has significantly increased following revelations that 1,700 individuals, who contracted the disease during the blood transfusion scandal, remain undiagnosed. According to the Hepatitis C Trust, these individuals are part of the approximately 27,000 people infected with contaminated blood from the 1970s until 1991, considered the NHS's biggest treatment disaster.

Reports indicate that 12,800 people in England requested NHS home-testing kits in just over a week, a stark contrast to the 2,300 requests throughout April.

Hepatitis C, often called the 'silent killer,' can cause chronic liver disease and is potentially fatal if left untreated. Initial symptoms may include night sweats, brain fog, itchy skin, and fatigue, with an increased risk of liver cancer over time.

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt is set to announce a £10 billion compensation package for scandal victims, intending to offer 'life-changing' payouts. Hunt's promise follows advocacy efforts led by campaigner Mike Dorricott since 2014. An independent inquiry led by Sir Brian Langstaff is expected to deliver its final report, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak expected to formally respond afterward.

The infected blood scandal, which saw over 30,000 people in the UK given contaminated blood products resulting in HIV and hepatitis C infections, has been widely regarded as a significant health disaster. Interim payments of £100,000 each have already been made to about 4,000 survivors and bereaved partners, with the final compensation details pending the inquiry's recommendations.