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Haemophilia care – from uncertainty to optimism

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My journey in Haemophilia care started as a new Haematology Consultant at Royal Brisbane Hospital. 1984 was a challenging start with the existing issues of Non-A, Non-B Hepatitis and minimal factor concentrates available. HIV became prominent in Australia for those with inherited bleeding disorders in mid-1984, with the community shocked and disillusioned. But 1984 also saw the identification of the Factor VIII gene and promise of non-plasma based therapies. The Haemophilia community was devastated by HIV and Hepatitis C then and into the future.

Further optimism emerged in the 1990s with the advent of recombinant factor VIII and IX concentrates and protease inhibitors and other therapies for HIV. It was not until early 2000s and establishment of Australian Haemophilia Centre Directors Organisation (AHCDO) and National Blood Authority (NBA) that recombinant concentrates were available to all.

Over the last few years there has been expanding numbers of treatments including modified factor concentrates with longer half lives and monoclonal antibodies, as mimetics of coagulation factors, or to rebalance haemostasis. These products and with the advent of sustained realistic responses with gene therapy will dramatically change outcomes and quality of life for those affected with Haemophilia.