

October 24, 1939

Dear Maizels,

Many thanks for your letter. As you say "in strict confidence". I am not sending your letter to Taylor until you have specifically given me permission, though I imagine that your letter was as much to him as to me. As to shaking the confidence of the public at large, I think there is a very complete answer as follows:

It would, in any case, be probably a year before anything could be published on the frequency and nature of error in grouping. When published, it would be by no means an alarmist publication, but presumably a detailed technical study, published in the Annals of Eugenics, and, to guard against the rather remote chance of a Journalist making copy of this, a few clauses of a reassuring nature could always be put into the summary.

Actually, any sign of a scrupulous examination into grouping errors and their cause would itself be the strongest reassurance that the public can have.

As I said before, from our own experience we are sure that errors of about the percentage you say do occur, and should very much like to know the contributions of technical errors depending on serum strength, inexperience and clerical errors respectively.

I should like you, if you would cooperate, to get in touch with Miss Young, working with Dr Oliver, Blood Transfusion/Centre Sutton, and see whether you can give her any information to further the study of errors which she has started on the Sutton material. It is possible that Taylor may be able to carry out some special retests to supplement what has been found out in the course of routine work. In these hands it is certainly not likely to develop into an attack on the technique of blood grouping, or the activities of the transfusion service.

Yours sincerely,

[M. Maizels,
Blood Transfusion Service,
Maidstone.] JHB.