What is haemophilia A?

Haemophilia is a genetic disorder that affects the body's ability to make normal blood clots. It occurs in about 1 in 5000 male births in the UK. Haemophilia is most common in people with severe disease, where a person is unable to produce a clotting factor called factor VIII, and in people with moderate disease, where a person has a low level of factor VIII.

Haemophilia A is caused by a lack of factor VIII, which is a protein that plays a key role in the blood clotting process. When a person with haemophilia A cuts or grazes, it can take much longer for the blood to clot properly.

What happens in the blood of a person with haemophilia A?

Without treatment, people with haemophilia A can suffer:

- Bleeding into muscles and joints, which can lead to pain and long-term disability
- Bleeding into the brain, which can be life-threatening
- Bleeding into the eyes, which can lead to vision problems

Life with haemophilia – the burden of treatment

People with severe haemophilia A can experience frequent and severe bleeding episodes, which can be painful and disabling. Treatment options for haemophilia A include factor VIII replacement therapy, which is the mainstay of current treatment for people with haemophilia A. However, people with severe haemophilia A may develop ‘inhibitors’ to factor VIII, which can make treatment more difficult.

Further effective and safe treatment options for people with haemophilia A are needed. People with severe haemophilia A are living longer and are more likely to develop joint disease, which can lead to disability and reduced quality of life.

References

17. Marder VJ, et al.