Tree of Terms for Transfusion Hepatitis

PTH

Innocent looking but stands for Post Transfusion Hepatitis and very easy to miss in photocopied old scribble

Serum hepatitis

In the pre-1985 era serum hepatitis was a common term meaning hepatitis caused by a transfusion

Non a and Non b?

Means possible Hep C and often scribbled with a question mark before the confirming Hep C test was invented

Raised enzymes

Post transfusion a surge in direct and indirect Bilirubin, AST and ALT enzymes is a common signature of infection

Acute Hepatitis

Term for onset flare of hepatitis symptoms, not to be confused with acute liver failure

Raised ALT

ALT from 400 to 3000 is a clear sign of acute Hep B and slightly lower 400 to 1500 of acute Hep C.

Jaundice

Often simply recorded in notes yellowing of eye whites and skin and is a sign of onset hep b and c. Fatigue and nausea often accompany it.

Hepatitis Risk

Post Transfusion patients suspected of Hepatitis would often suddenly have “Hepatitis Risk” stamped on notes to warn staff.

Australia Antigen

Written also as Australia A, it means Hep b and after a recent transfusion is key evidence.

Icteric Hepatitis

Is another medical term meaning jaundiced or yellow eyes or skin, often scribbled as just icteric.

**Doctors and staff did not just write transfusion hepatitis on notes, they often recorded symptoms or possibilities in the terms of the time. They freely noted the 1% of the transfused who showed obvious signs of hepatitis in many ways, some are above. With a delay in symptoms possible for several weeks it is good to scope 12 months of notes for signs of hidden onset symptoms such as nausea weight loss and tiredness also.**