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[Home](#) > [News](#) > [world-news](#)

## Scots doctors launch trial to remove 'mad cow' risk from donated blood

London, May 11 : Scottish doctors have launched the world's first trial to make blood transfusions free of the human form of 'mad cow disease.'

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Scottish Blood Transfusion service conducted the trials using a filter developed by an international medical supplies firm MacoPharma.

The device, which works in a similar way to a [coffee filter](#), removes the prions, which cause variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob (vCJD), a fatal disease that causes brain damage.

The filter contains a resin that binds to the prions and removes them from the blood.



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Doctors hope that the new treatment will lead to the removal of vCJD from the human blood supply and ultimately from the population.

Dr Marc Turner, scientific director of the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service, said that the healthy volunteers who have taken part in the trials have shown no ill effects from receiving the filtered blood so similar trials can now be conducted on patients.

"There are concerns about the risk of vCJD in blood supplies. If we can show these filters are likely to be effective and are safe, it's an extremely promising development," Scotsman quoted him, as saying.

If the process is considered safe and effective it will be a major advance in the fight against vCJD.

So far, tests on the prion filter using animals have shown that it prevents the prions being passed on from a [blood donor](#) to a recipient.

However, it is currently virtually impossible to test whether it prevents the spread of the infection in humans because the only way to find out would be to carry out invasive tests on blood recipients' brains and other body parts like tonsils.

Turner and his colleagues believe that the fact it works in animals means it would also work in humans.

Hospitals in other parts of the UK and Ireland are also taking part in the study.

--- ANI

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