

Where do we Stand Towards 100% Voluntary Blood Donation – are we Really Moving Towards Achieving the Goal?

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Voluntary blood donation is an act of selflessness, out of the principle or practice of concern for the welfare of others. Blood donors demonstrate altruistic behavior and a good attitude towards the well-being of society. Donors who give blood voluntarily and for altruistic reasons have a lower prevalence of HIV, hepatitis viruses and other blood-borne infections than people who donate for family members or for payment. The dream and the ultimate aim of the developing countries is to achieve total 100% voluntary blood donations to provide safe blood for a needy population. Developing countries are working hard to face issues linked to lack of blood donation.

The Challenges

The challenges in achieving 100% voluntary blood donation depends upon many factors such as: government commitment and support for the cause, donor education programs and communication strategies, trained staff in blood donor motivation, donor care and recognition. There are many factors that determine the efficient and effective functioning of a blood bank to meet recipient ne _

influencers of blood donors to develop blood donation habits and increase blood donor return behavior (Siromani et al., 2013). There should be uniform blood donation and blood collection criteria across any given country. The atmosphere of a blood collection facility, with competent and skilled staff, improves psychological aspects for the first-time blood donors and therefore reduces anxiety, stress and syncopal reactions.

Global Statistics

According to WHO Global Blood Safety, around 103 million blood donations are made annually by all types of blood donors; – ffty

percent of all blood donations are collected in developed countries, home to 18% of the world's population. The average donation rate in developed countries is 36.8 donations per 1000 population. This compares with 11.7 per 1000 population in transitional countries and 3.9 donations in developing countries. If 1% of a country's population donates blood, it will be sufficient to meet that country's basic requirements for blood for transfusion. But donation rates are still less than 1% of the population in 75 countries and all of them are developing and transitional countries (WHO, 2014).

The shortage of safe blood is therefore aggravated by the shortage of blood donors in developing countries, where blood is needed most for clinical reasons. The proportion of safe donors is highest in systems where all donors are voluntary and non-remunerated (Gibs, & Corcoran, 1994). Many developing countries still rely on blood from family members, or paid donors and in these countries, the seroprevalence in blood donors for transfusion-transmissible infections (TTI's) such as HIV, hepatitis B and C, and syphilis, is much higher than in countries with voluntary, unpaid donation.

Where do we stand

In many developing countries the majority of blood donors are students and the younger generation. They are involving them more and blood donation awareness programs are particularly targeting them. And eventually many of the blood donation drives are conducted in the educational institutions and few from the community. Is that alone will help us to reach our goal? It is difficult to reach the targets involving the students and younger generation alone.

Involving general public

But can reach our goal if we successfully target the general public at large. There should be a simple and effective communication strategy; and local languages should be used more to understand the cause better. Pledge clubs and cause ambassadors should be encouraged among public.

Social networks and media are effective and reliable tools to propagate, the need and importance of donating blood. Tailor-made communications methods are much more effective, because they

can be gently varied, according to the needs of communities and localities. Blood banks should also involve the general public in this