

# BLOOD LINE

THE *voluntary* BLOOD DONATION JOURNAL

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## ROLE OF VOLUNTARY DONORS IN BLOOD SAFETY

Adequacy and safety of blood is the prime concern of medical community and the society at large. It is documented that voluntary donors are the safest group as the positivity for infections transmitted through blood transfusions are very less. World Blood Donors day (14th June every year) and National Blood Donation day (1st Oct) are celebrated to promote voluntary donation in the country..

### Transfusion Transmitted Infections (TTI)

Stringent donor selection criteria and adoption of improved sophisticated and sensitive testing methods have reduced the risk of TTI but could not be eliminated fully. The greatest threat to the safety of the blood supply is the blood donation by sero-negative donors during the infectious window period.

Many bacteria, virus & parasites can be transmitted through blood if a person is infected with these organisms. Majority of the organisms after the entry in to the human blood show signs and symptoms of the illness. But there are few organisms that can harbor in human blood without showing any signs and symptoms for a long period. This condition is called chronic carrier state. Human Immunodeficiency viruses, Hepatitis B virus, Hepatitis C virus, Treponema Pallidum, bacteria causing Syphilis, Plasmodium which causes Malaria are the major ones among these. So these can be transmitted and cause serious complications in the recipient of the infected blood. After blood donation each blood unit will be tested and only test negative blood will be transfused to patients. Tests for these five organisms are

mandatory in our country. In many countries more infective organisms are screened like West Nile virus (WNV), Cytomegalovirus (CMV), Human T-Cell Lymphotropic Viruses (HTLVs), Parvovirus B19 etc.

Any organism after entry to the blood stream will multiply in number. Human body starts producing antibodies against these organisms to eliminate it. Tests are designed to find out the presence of markers of infection in the blood. Enzyme linked Immuno Sorbent Assay (ELISA) is the test method currently used by most of the blood banks. The antigens, antibodies and the nucleic acid (genetic material) are the markers of infection. Tests to detect the antigen, antibody or antigen-antibody combinations are available. The ability to detect depends on the amount of antigen/ antibody present in the blood. Responses of the person to the infective organism also vary. Some people respond poorly to the infection and take more time to produce the antibodies, thus delay detection. Usually it takes weeks to months. But the blood from this person can be infectious and get transmitted to the recipient of the blood. This period is called the window period. An earlier marker is nucleic acid, either DNA or RNA, specific for each organism. To reduce the window period, tests are available to detect the DNA/RNA called Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAT) even before the production of antibodies. This test is an addition to the previous tests. This test is more sensitive but cost is the limiting factor for implementation in all blood banks. Blood tested with this test is also not 100% safe as it too require a minimum number of organisms to be detected. Over the last two decades much attention



**Dr PV Sulochana**  
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Thiruvananthapuram

has been given to the prevention of Transfusion Transmitted Infections. Even after all these measures 100% safety could not be ensured. Blood safety starts from the donor. A safe donor is the key to safe blood. So it is the prime responsibility of the donor to be safe. Repeat voluntary blood donation is the corner stone in blood safety. Statistics from NACO shows that positivity rates for viral infections like Human Immunodeficiency Virus 1&2, Hepatitis B & C and syphilis are less among voluntary Non Remunerated blood donors compared to the replacement family donors.

Annually India requires 8 million units of blood but only 5 million units are collected. 62 out of 193 WHO member states report collecting 100% of their blood supplies from voluntary donors including Zimbabwe. Some countries have high levels of voluntary blood donors. Switzerland have 113/1000, Japan 70/1000 while India has only 4/1000 people. It is recommended that 1-3% of a country's population should donate to meet the blood requirement. It is the responsibility of the civil society to achieve the goal.

# WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVANCE- INAUGURATION & INAUGURAL CEREMONY



**Inauguration and Inaugural Address-**  
Dr. Thomas Mathew, Principal,  
Medical College Hospital, Trivandrum



**Presidential Address-**  
Ms. Sarada Jayakrishnan, DGM (QA),  
TERUMO PENPOL PVT Limited



**Panel Discussion on Safe Blood Donation -**Dr. Meena D, Dept. of Transfusion Medicine, Medical College Hospital Trivandrum



**Panel Discussion on Safe Blood Donation-** Dr.S.Sathyabhama, Scientist G, Department of Transfusion Medicine, SCTIMST



**Panel Discussion on Safe Blood Donation -**Dr.Vijayalekshmi K, Dept. of Transfusion Medicine, Regional Cancer Center, Trivandrum



**Panel Discussion on Safe Blood Donation -**Dr. Shaji P S, Dept. of Transfusion Medicine, Medical College Hospital, Trivandrum



**Welcome Speech -** Dr. Manish Nair, Jr. Resident, Dept of Transfusion Medicine, Medical College Hospital, Trivandrum



**Vote of Thanks-**  
Wilson T, Sr. Executive (Processing),  
TERUMO PENPOL PVT. Limited

## WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVANCE

TERUMO PENPOL in association with the Department of Transfusion Medicine, Trivandrum Medical College observed World AIDS Day on December 1, 2017. As a curtain raiser event, TERUMO PENPOL had organized two blood donation camps- one camp at the Company Secretary's Conference at Al Saj Convention Center and another camp at Vattiyurkavu Vocational Higher Secondary School.

Dr. Manish, Jr. Resident of Dept. of Transfusion Medicine organized awareness session on HIV prevention at Cotton Hill Higher Secondary School and at Vattiyurkavu Vocational Higher Secondary School. Dr. Thomas Mathew, the Principal of MCH inaugurated the function. Ms. Sarada Jayakrishnan, DGM (BBF QA) presided over the function.

A panel discussion on safe blood donation was arranged involving Dr.Meena, HOD, Transfusion Medicine Department, Medical College Hospital,



Dr Vijayalekshmi, HOD, Transfusion Medicine Department, Regional Cancer Center and Dr Sathyabhama, Scientist G from SCTIMST.

A skit contest on HIV AIDS Prevention was also organized and Cotton Hill Higher Secondary School emerged as the winner.

The main objective of the event was to promote the concept that repeat regular blood donation could prevent HIV AIDS.

## SKIT CONTEST

A skit contest on HIV AIDS Prevention was organized and Cotton Hill Higher Secondary School emerged as the winner.

To complement the global World AIDS Day 2017 campaign which promotes the theme "Right to health", the skit highlighted the need for all people living with HIV and those who are vulnerable and affected by the epidemic, to reach the goal of universal health coverage.

The theme for World AIDS Day is LET'S END IT, End isolation, End stigma .End HIV transmission.

This World AIDS Day we join the fight to end the negative impact of HIV. But our fight is not just about the virus. For the people living with HIV in the World ignorance and discrimination can still limit opportunities, preventing them from living full and happy lives. However, we need a new burst of energy to end stigma, end HIV transmission and end the isolation experienced by people living with HIV, for good.





# PANEL DISCUSSION ON SAFE BLOOD DONATION



As part of World AIDS day a panel discussion on safe blood donation was arranged involving Dr. Meena, HOD, Transfusion Medicine Department, Medical College Hospital, Dr Vijayalekshmi, HOD, Transfusion Medicine Department, Regional Cancer Center and Dr Sathyabhama, Scientist G from Transfusion Medicine Department, SCTIMST.

The main objective of the panel discussion was to promote the concept that repeat regular blood donation could prevent HIV AIDS.

India has come a long way in making safe blood available throughout the year, but much remains to be done before we reach the cherished goal of 100 per cent voluntary donation and the availability of safe blood across the country at all times. This is food for thought, especially on World AIDS Day which is observed every year on December 1 2017 .

Voluntary donors from low-risk populations form the cornerstone of a pro-

gramme of safe and adequate blood supply. Yet, voluntary donation comprises only about 70 per cent of the demand in India, with the rest being met by replacement donation.

Replacement donors are friends and relatives of a patient who donate blood as replacement for the blood given to the patient. Though paid blood donation was banned in January 1998 after the Supreme Court's directive, replacement donation now ensures that professional donation continues to operate in the form of relatives/friends.

That professional donors pass off as replacement donors at blood banks and hospitals is rather a norm in the case of patients who have been admitted to tertiary care hospitals in a new city.

At times, these replacement donors (friends and relatives) are more likely to harm the recipients by hiding or overlooking the many don'ts of donation. Compounding this is the fact that many hospitals and banks often won't be able to study their elaborate medical history and carry out behavioural screening.

Though voluntary self-deferral to donate without citing reasons is widely accepted, replacement donors rarely resort to it either to hide their high-risk behaviour or due to pressure to meet the immediate demand for certain units of blood. As a result, the prevalence of

HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C is much higher among family donors when compared to voluntary donors.

Though donated blood is screened for transfusion transmitted infections (TTI) such as HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, syphilis and malaria, the tests fail to detect the diseases in the window period of infection.

In the case of HIV, the window period (time between exposure to infection and the point when the test reflects accurate results) varies depending on the sensitivity and specificity of the assay used. Further, the risk of replacement donors having TTIs is 1.5-2.5 times higher than for voluntary donors.

Donating safe blood can become a reality only when replacement donors are phased out and the focus is shifted to increasing blood collection through voluntary donations to meet 'over 95 per cent of blood requirement'. This can be done through increased awareness, providing appropriate facilities for people to donate blood, and improved donor retention.

The concerted efforts by the government, blood banks and others have resulted in a progressive increase in voluntary blood donation.

## ICSI UPHOLDS ITS SOCIAL COMMITMENT BY ORGANISING BLOOD DONATION CAMP

As part of the 45th ICSI National Convention held at Trivandrum from 22nd November 2017 to 24th November 2017, Terumo Penpol organized a Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) camp with the support of Regional Cancer Center. The event was the first of its kind in the history of Company Secretaries National Convention. The camp showcased the social commitment of Company Secretaries from all over India. A VBD booth was set up at the venue during the 3 days of ICSI National Convention with a view to promote Voluntary Blood Donation and to create awareness. Quiz program, felicitation for repeat regular donors etc. were arranged.



## BLOOD DONATION AWARENESS SESSION AT COTTON HILL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL AND VOCATIONAL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

TERUMO PENPOL, conducted an interactive session in which the students were educated about the importance of donating blood. Dr. Manish Nair, Jr. Resident, Dept of Transfusion Medicine was the Chief Guest, shared vital information regarding blood donation. The session was a great learning experience for the students.

A Blood Donation Drive was held at the Schools after the awareness session at the Schools.



## A STORY SHOWING THE NEED OF BLOOD AND IMPORTANCE OF BLOOD DONATION

Rakta Kranti Schools awareness program ensures that learning and fun comes together. When it is time for the children to show case their talents and knowledge of what they have grasped of the importance of voluntary blood donation, one of the students had this to say.

NAME : Muhammad Sajid Ali  
CLASS : 10  
SCHOOL: Rajarajeshwari English school

Once, there lived a small family of three, a father a mother and a son and were blessed in millions. He was a great visionary, wanted to be a doctor and serve the nation.

He was in his last year of MBBS. His loving parents brought him up in a hard way. His exams were over and he was coming back home to say a very good news to his parents that he had passed the examination by securing very high marks. His parents dreamt for it every day and this was the time for them to be excited, but one incident changed their

lives.

While his son was returning home a drunken man in a car hit him. He was severely wounded and was bleeding. The public gathered but not even one cared to call the ambulance. They watched the victim helplessly. The public disappointed a young teenaged lad of high school and he called the ambulance.

The victim was soon taken to the hospital and his parents came there. They were in great pain shedding tears. The doctor told them to bring four units of blood belonging to o Negative group. The helpless parents went to the blood bank but failed to find even one single unit of blood because there were not many blood donors who voluntarily donate blood.

They begged in streets to give their son a second life, but the pedestrians laughed at them and walked forward by passing provoking comments. They went to public toilets, apartments, each and every house, shops, markets, malls, shopping centres to get blood but failed

to get even one unit of blood.

They rushed back to the hospital and watched helplessly their only son breathing for the last time. Hence, we in our daily life are going through such situations. Every 80 seconds someone or the other is looking for blood. Only one out of 2 gets blood in this city. It is each and everyone's duty to donate blood once we are eligible.

In a country of 102 crore if each would donate blood by sparing just 15 minutes once in 3 months, it would make a very big difference to the nation. India will turn into a "100% BLOOD DONATED COUNTRY"

Even many organizations and foundations like Sankalp India Foundation must work simultaneously to make a change rapidly in the nation. I take oath that- "I will surely donate blood once I am eligible and I will do my level best to make whole of India donate blood".

Source :Sankalp India Foundation

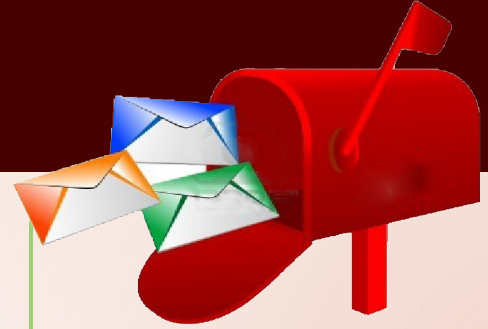
## VOCATIONAL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL, VATTIYURKAVU ORGANIZES FIRST BLOOD DONATION AT THEIR SCHOOL

The students from Vocational Higher Secondary School, Vattiyurkavu showed an enthusiastic vigor and willingness towards the blood donation camp, organized in association with TERUMO PENPOL and SCTIMST Blood Bank at their School. It is not only the intellectual domain, which is being catered at their School, but learning social responsibility has its equal share. Through this camp, the students came to know about the dire need of blood donation in the blood bank, as scarcity of the blood in the blood banks is causing many precious lives across the country. They were also briefed about the advantages of blood donation on regular basis, which in turn create healthy blood cells in our body at a much faster rate.





# Letters to the editor



Thanks for sending this along.  
I always enjoy reading it. Well done!!

**Frank Corbin**  
Vice President New Venture Technologies for Terumo Bct, Inc.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Reference to above Blood Line, News Letter

Thanks for publishing this news letter with interesting information about blood banking and voluntary donation.

However there is some misinformation on page sis in the column 4 steps to blood donation:

Eligibility: The age is 18-65 as per new amendment in drug act. The donor weight has to be more than 48 Kg. and for component it should be more than 55 Kg.

Kindly publish the corrigendum in your next issue.

**Dr. Bharat Singh**  
Consultant Blood Transfusion Services, G T B Hospital & Univ. college of Medical Sciences New Delhi

Thanks for sending the Blood Line Journal. Your efforts to promote voluntary blood donation movement is highly appreciable. The articles of the Journal are very informative and educative for motivating voluntary blood donors.

With best regards,

**Machakaji Maharjan**  
Central Treasurer  
Blood Donors Association Nepal (BLODAN)

Hi Baby,  
Looks very good. Dr. Latha is also just going through it.

**Ms. Shalini Gambir**  
BMST,

Dear Baby-san,

Thank you for sending the latest Blood Line Journal.  
Best regards,

**Hideki ITO**  
International Business Dept.  
TERUMO CORPORATION

Dear Baby Madam,  
Received the latest Blood Line soft copy.  
Thanks for the same.  
Good to see the motivational programmes organised by TPPL for Voluntary Blood Donation.  
Please send it regularly.  
Regards

**Umalkar**  
Blood Donors  
Association Nepal (BLODAN)

With your kind knowledge, I think thalassemia kids in India receiving blood in time.  
Recently Thalassaemia kids met Hon'ble President of India Sh. Ram Nath Kovind.

**Ravinder Dudeja**  
Founder Gen. Sect.  
Foundation Against  
Thalassaemia Regd.  
A 15 / F Nehru Ground Near  
Canara Bank N.I.T. Faridabad  
121001  
Haryana India

Dear Baby san,

Thank you so much!!

Best regards,

**Yosuke Sato**  
Global Product Manager  
TBV & TPPL, Whole Blood Manual  
TERUMO BCT

Dear Baby-San,

Thank you for the article.

With Best Regards,

**Masanori Sato**

Dear Ms. Baby,

Thank you for sending me the latest issue of Bloodline. As in the past, the issue is full of good news and useful information.

Congratulations.

Kind regards,

**Dilip Varma**

Dear Ms. Baby,

Thanks for forwarding the journal. It was a good read and all the best for your good work.

I am writing this mail to check the feasibility of arranging a blood donation camp in our office in Technopark Phase 3 Yamuna Bldg.

We are a company of around 80 employees, is it possible to arrange a camp here. Is there a minimum donors required to arrange a camp?

Please confirm based on which I can check with the management and also with our employees to see how many will be interested for the same.

Thanks & Regards,

**Suku Thomas**

HR ERAM Infotech

## BENEFITS OF HOSTING A BLOOD DRIVE

Hosting a blood drive at your school and College is a true partnership where everyone wins.

- Your school/college gains goodwill from the community and builds morale and camaraderie as students work together for a good cause.
- Student leaders learn about civic responsibility and about planning and coordinating a community event.
- Your donors feel good about giving back with other students, friends, faculty and members of the community.
- Your school and students help the Blood Beak fulfill its mission of ensuring the availability of a safe and reliable blood supply.
- Patients in the community and across the nation receive the gift of life.



# STUDENTS AGAINST BLOOD CANCER- COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM IN THE FOREFRONT TO PROMOTE STEM CELL DONATION

On 21st and 22nd November 2017, the Stem Cell Registry India (SCRI) conducted a stem cell awareness and donor registration drive, at the College of Engineering (CET) Thiruvananthapuram in association with Terumo Penpol. This effort was led by the NSS students guided by the CET NSS Programme Officer, Dr. Joy Varghese .

At the event, 149 highly motivated students signed up as Potential Stem Cell Donors with SCRI to help blood cancer patients in need of a life-saving stem cell transplant. All registered donors will now be available on worldwide registries which are searched daily for patient-donor matches. They may be the right match one day, and then could become a true lifesaver with their stem cell donation, through an easy and simple procedure

## Stem Cell Registry India (SCRI)

SCRI is an initiative of the Bangalore Medical Services Trust (BMST), supported by DKMS, an international non-profit organization dedicated to the fight against blood cancer. Their joint

aim is to register potential stem cell donors. By doing this they help patients suffering from blood cancer and other blood-related disorders, like thalassemia and aplastic anemia, to find a matching stem cell donor and get a second chance at life.

Bangalore Medical Services Trust (BMST) was established as an NGO by the Rotary Club of Bangalore and TTK & Company in 1984. Initially set up to provide blood-banking services through its division, the Rotary Bangalore-TTK Blood Bank, BMST has evolved over time to become a centre of excellence. Accredited by NABH, BMST is recognized for its training, quality and donor safety by NACO, WHO, RGUHS, NBTC (National Blood Transfusion Council) and Christian Medical Association of India. If you would also like to join the fight against blood cancer and conduct such events at your organizations / colleges, send an email to, Ms Shalini Gambhir, Head - Donor Recruitment & Communications, at [shalini@bmsindia.org](mailto:shalini@bmsindia.org), or call 080-2521 2117/ 2115. For further information please visit [www.bmsindia.org.in](http://www.bmsindia.org.in)



## INDIA'S CHIEF JUSTICE HAS BEEN DONATING BLOOD FOR 40 YEARS, BUT IT'S TIME TO STOP

Doctors have decided that at 65, they can't allow him to continue.

August seems to be the month that heralds the end of many longstanding habits for India's 44th Chief Justice, Jagdish Singh Khehar. In addition to retiring as a judge, when he turns 65, Justice Khehar will also have to retire from blood donation, a tradition he's maintained unflinchingly every three months for the last 40 years.

Doctors attending to him at the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) have officially decreed that Justice Khehar is officially too old to continue donating blood, reported The Telegraph. The decision was relayed to him on his quarterly visit to the hospital on 1 August.

Fortunately, the decision has been made purely due to age, not because Justice Khehar suffers from any ailments that disqualify him from donation.

Although the doctor's orders were met by some initial

resistance by Justice Khehar, eventually he had to give in. This is one judgement even India's topmost authority on law cannot overturn.

According to the guidelines recommended by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), a person between the age of 18 to 65 can donate blood once every three months provided that they are physically fit, mentally alert and in good health, with a hemoglobin count of over 12.5 grams, among other criteria. These guidelines are not enforceable and blood banks use their own discretion to decide if the donor is over the age of 65.

Justice Khehar, the son of a Kenyan immigrant, has been a vociferous supporter of blood donation all his life. In January, when he was sworn in as the CJI, Financial Express reported that he never missed donation camps organised by the Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar Association.

Source: Hindustan Times



## MORE DRIVES ARE NEEDED TO FILL HUGE REQUIREMENT

The State Blood Transfusion Council's mandate to hospitals to not force relatives to get replacement blood donors has highlighted the need for more voluntary blood donors in the country. The need to get replacement donors is often due to the ignorance of hospitals in organising enough blood donation camps, lack of proper management of donated blood that leads to wastage and an overall low percentage of voluntary blood donors.

Vinay Shetty from Think Foundation in Mumbai, which organises blood donation camps, feels hospitals should devise a system of inviting people on a regular basis to donate blood. "They should start blood donor clubs in hospitals to ensure a continuous cycle. These donors could be motivated by some felicitation or celebrity programme organised for them." Blood donation camps, however, should be hospitals' main focus. "They should reach out to people in temples, churches, housing societies, etc and reach the donors instead of making them come to the hospital," he said.

In case of replacement blood donation,

when a patient is hospitalised and requires blood transfusion, hospitals often demand that relatives and friends donate blood to restore the units utilised for their patient. The State Blood Transfusion Council (SBTC) has issued a circular to all blood banks across Maharashtra demanding that they should stop replacement blood donation and instead achieve 100% voluntary blood collection for patients.

The SBTC also pulled up four hospitals for largely depending on replacement donors and has given them three months to covert this pattern or face action.

Messages on social media and phone requesting for 'urgent blood donors' mainly come from relatives or friends of a patient who is hospitalized and the authorities demand that the blood utilised for the patient should be replaced. The National Blood Policy, formulated in the 2002, stated that no hospital should depend on replacement donors. It had stated that replacement blood donation should gradually be phased out but that is yet to happen.

Dr. Sunil Rajadhyaksha, Head of Trans-

fusion Medicine at Tata Memorial Hospital, said there should definitely be no coercion or conditional blood donation. "But there are situations when there is not enough blood. Those kind of situations should be avoided by ensuring a collective effort towards voluntary blood donation," said Dr. Rajadhyaksha. He says Tata Memorial organises a blood camp almost every day, given that the requirement of blood in the hospital is so high. However, one patient often requires 40 to 50 bags of blood at a time. "What does one do when such a need arises suddenly? There has to be an unhindered cycle of donation and it has to be managed properly as well," said Dr. Rajadhyaksha.

According to the Federation of Bombay Blood Banks, an NGO formed by 48 blood banks in Mumbai, 70% of Mumbai's population has never donated blood. Amongst the most common fear is being infected with HIV. Some also fear weakness and needle pricks, which keep them away from donating.

Source: The Hindu

## WILL FACEBOOK'S BLOOD DONOR REGISTRATION FEATURE AID INDIA'S BLOOD BANKS ?

**Facebook aims to make it easy for its users to connect with those who may need blood, but it remains to be seen whether real donors will step up, instead of just sharing a Facebook badge claiming that they are blood donors.**

In India, a new Facebook feature to register users as blood donors has attracted mixed reactions from the public. The feature will allow individuals and hospitals in need of blood to notify nearby donors, by creating posts that include information like blood type, location and the reason for the donation. Potential donors will be able to respond to requests via WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, or even a phone call.

India has a considerable shortage of blood in its blood banks, with more than 38,000 donations reportedly required every day to balance it. Due to the shortage, patients and their relatives either have to search for their requirements from their own networks, or ask the public by using social media - but it is still difficult and time-consuming, both to find donors, or to donate blood to someone in need.

Facebook has more than 241 million users in India. To harness this country-wide userbase, the technology giant made it easy for Facebook users to register as potential blood donors, and connect with people or organisations within their vicinity that may need blood.

Twitter Ads information and privacy Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder, chairperson and CEO of Facebook, wrote about how the project was conceived:

"The idea for this feature came out of a hackathon, and Hema Budaraju, one of our product managers, helped make it a reality. This issue is personal to Hema, whose father was diagnosed with cancer five years ago and lost so much blood during chemotherapy that he had to have a transfusion every day for a week. Hema had to reach out to friends and family to ask for donors and many people showed up once they realised it would help her dad. This is a constant reminder for Hema that people are always willing to help, they just need the tools and information to do so."

The feature became available on October 1, which is India's National Blood Donor

Day. India lacks a central blood collection agency, and illegal blood markets thrive in times of need. There are also potential health hazards from using unscreened blood from "professional" donors.

Educator Virendra Banshal lauded the effort:

This is an excellent use of social media. I would like to urge Facebook to also try and develop a feature to encourage organ donation consistent with the prevalent regulations with a brief introduction to the dire need for organ donors in the country.

The new tool, which is currently available only in India, got considerable attention from Facebook users. The feature falls in line with Facebook's crisis response efforts (like Safety Check), and this database of potential donors can be harnessed during disasters. In 2012, Facebook undertook a similar drive to sign people up for organ donation in US, Canada and Mexico, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of people registering as donors.

However, some users appear unsure about how the blood donation feature works.



## INDIA CAN B+ THANKS TO KHOON: A STARTUP TACKLING BLOOD DONATION SHORTAGE

Despite a population of 1.3 billion, India faces an overwhelming shortage of donated blood.

India requires 12 million blood units annually. However, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) reported a blood shortage of two million units last year. With the amount of road accidents that occur everyday in India, and the high levels of cancer patients who require blood transfusions, the need for donated blood is always urgent. In Mumbai alone, 900 blood units are needed each day for surgeries and blood transfusions. Due to a lack of knowledge and various unfounded myths over the simple process of donating blood, the unavailability of blood is leading to many unnecessary deaths.

Over 100 organisations and NGO's have been working closely with the government to implement measures to promote the necessity of blood donating.

In fact earlier this month a three-day national conference 'BlodCon-2017' was organised by the Federation of Indian Blood Donors Organisations (FIBDO). Blood Donor Motivator Organisations, including the National Blood Transfusion Council and the Hindustan Welfare Blood Donors Club, Phagwara, attended workshops and reviewed current activities and strategies for promoting a voluntary blood donation movement.

The conference focused on social dialogue and recruitment of new donors as it drew up major guidelines and roadmaps-entitled Vision 2020-for their aim

towards a program whereby all donations are from volunteers rather than paid donors.

However, despite the exhaustive work these organisations put in, people who need blood the most, and fast, are not getting it. New initiatives, and startups have found a way to combat this exact issue by using digital platforms. With 512 million people eligible for blood donations in India, the problem is not a shortage of blood, so to speak, but providing easy links and access between willing blood donors and people in need. Thanks to the advancements in tech, and an accessible digital ecosystem, data needed in this healthcare space can now be managed in an efficient manner.

In October, Facebook launched a new tool to try and connect its 201 million Indian users to blood banks and hospitals nearby. Using optional notification features whereby donors can be informed of nearby donation requests, the social media giant hopes the initiative will simplify the process of blood giving. At best it will spread awareness of the issue and need for blood donations to the many young users on Facebook.

A fairly new youth initiative and startup is also dedicating all efforts to bridging the gap between donors and patients. 17 year old Chethan M. from Bengaluru and his team at Khoon have become the important middlemen, connecting people who need blood with willing donors all over India through their online platform.

Chethan's motive behind starting Khoon back in September 2016 was to "provide a permanent solution in blood donation sector that has lasted for a decade, despite more than 100 organisations working for this cause."

The startup launched their new app this December which focuses on donor priority. The Khoon app will use data analysis to automatically notify all matched donors within a 10km radius when blood is urgently required. Using messenger pop ups the app will immediately ask the donor if transportation is needed. By teaming up with local cab agencies, Khoon will provide cab services to pick up the donor, and drop them home after the donation. Chethan also explained that food would be provided by Khoon for all donors. The app will work towards making the donation process as smooth as possible for both donor and patient in need of blood.

Blood donation camp organized by Khoon Working alongside the Red Cross, and other organizations such as the Sankalp India Foundation, Khoon is the first startup dealing with blood donations to be operating across India. After expanding in January 2017, Chethan and his team "have handled 1000 blood helpline requests in just 11 months. "Provided that the app is successfully implemented across the country, India has more than a thousand reasons to B+.

Source: Face book

## TPPL SUPPORTED KEBS TO ORGANIZE 102 CAMPS IN 2017

TERUMO PENPOL supported All Kerala Blood Donors Society to organize 102 Blood Donation camps in 2017. The 100th blood donation was organized in association with Kudumbasree Unit. The 101 Blood Donation camp was organized at Regional Cancer Centre Blood Bank. The 102 camp of 2017 was organized with the cultural association of KSHB Bhavan on 30th December at Housing board conference hall.

