

# BLOOD LINE

The Voluntary Blood Donation Journal | Issue 62 | 2022



## Expanding the realms of voluntary blood donor recruitment

Healthy, responsive and motivated voluntary blood donors are the back-bone of any blood transfusion service. Young people constitute an excellent pool of potential voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors. Recruiting and retaining them improves the long term safety and sufficiency of a country's blood supply and also reduces the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, by promoting safe lifestyles. The easiest way to involve the youth in blood donation is by incorporating technology in donor recruitment.

Technological advances have mitigated barriers in interpersonal communication. Gone are the days of leaflets, pamphlets, flyers and newspaper advertisements. These are now largely replaced by presentation software, messaging systems, telecommunication networks, videoconferencing, social networks, interactive message boards, websites, youtube videos and other forms of social interaction. Various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube, among others, offer their support to encourage blood donation in different countries. Certain social media accounts enable their users to individually sign up as blood donors and have also added the capacity for blood donation centres to share their donation opportunities helping to further boost the exposure.

Social media links people across countries, time zones, and also economic, social and gender disparities. Thus it presents a unique opportunity to mobilize donors from diverse sections of population. This is especially true for female blood donors. Currently, we are witnessing a surge in the number of female blood donors at our centre. Social media undoubtedly, has an important role in this. Positive messages spread through social media help in alleviating the fear and concerns of general population regarding blood donation.

Sharing individual blood donation experiences, photographs of blood donors and patients who have benefited from transfusion, through social media posts, attract first time blood donors and often serve as a reminder for repeat donors. Promotional messages by celebrities with large social media following, further reinforce this cause. Amid the covid-19 pandemic, when blood banks across the world faced acute blood shortage and were challenged by cancellations of blood drives, zoom meetings proved an excellent platform for information sharing, creating awareness among blood donors and framing new policies related to voluntary blood donation.

Today blood banks of all major hospitals in Kerala, like Government Medical College Trivandrum, Government Medical College Thrissur, Government Medical College Kottayam, have their own active facebook and Instagram accounts for interacting with blood donors. Through these platforms, the respective blood banks update reports on their blood needs and current blood stocks.

e-RaktKosh is a national platform for information about Blood Banks and blood availability across India and has been developed by C-DAC under the initiative of Blood Cell, National Health Mission, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India. Users may easily search blood banks, check the blood stock availability and may volunteer in various blood donation camps. It is the official portal for all blood related services in India. This facility is available on the UMANG app as well.

In addition, there are other apps like Friends2support, Mikudu, Donor2donor, for connecting patients promptly with a large pool of donors in the same locality. These are available on Google Play Store and Apple App store for free download. Google also provides ad grants for non-profit organizations to share their causes with the world. Blood centres may utilize them to raise awareness, attract donors, and recruit new volunteers using Googlesearch ads. That being said, social media has its own disadvantages too. Information sharing in social media is often unregulated and may lead to widespread sharing of unscientific information and hate speech by people with vested interests. This in turn will negatively impact donor recruitment.

Data security is another concern with growing technological advancements. The confidentiality of donor information must be maintained at all times to protect donor interests and maintain trust between the donor and the blood transfusion service. Only designated staff should have access to donor records and data. However blood banks in India face constraints in procuring latest cyber security technologies that ensure document control.

The bottom line is to ensure judicious use of modern technology for promoting blood donation while keeping a check on the spread of misinformation. Strategies should be devised by individual blood banks to prevent data leakage that can cause potential threat to donor confidentiality.



**Dr. Meenu. P,**  
Senior Resident  
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## TERUMO PENPOL celebrated World Aids Day in association with NSS CET

As part of World AIDS Day, Terumo Penpol in association with NSS CET organized an awareness session on safe blood donation and HIV AIDS Prevention on December 1, 2021. The programme was inaugurated by Suneesh P, Regional Coordinator, APJ NSS Cell.

Mr. Shinu C Nair, DGM Medical Equipment (I&D) of TERUMO PENPOL delivered the keynote address.

The awareness talk session delivered by Dr.Sajith Vilambil, Associate Professor, Department of Transfusion Medicine, Government Medical College, Trivandrum & District Nodal Officer for Blood Transfusion Services, Thrissur described the importance of blood transfusion and the involvement of youth in blood donation. An informative talk session regarding AIDS was given by Majnu, ICTC Counselor, Kerala State AIDS Control Society.

CET NSS Program officers, Dr.Bringile C Das and Dr.Joy Varghese and Ms. Baby P S, In Charge (PR&CSR), Terumo Penpol addressed the volunteers. The function concluded with cultural events, including a dance performance and a musical event performed by a group of talented NSS volunteers.





## Blood Donation camp as part of World AIDS Day

As part of world AIDS day, TERUMO PENPOL and NSS CET Unit conducted a Blood donation camp on December 1. The Blood Donation camp was organized with the support of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology Blood Bank. The camp was inaugurated by Dr. Unnikrishnan N, Head of the Civil department. Programme Officer Bringle C Das addressed the volunteers. 80 Registrations were received at the spot and a total of 42 donations were completed.



# Management Of Blood Inventory During COVID-19 Pandemic

## -An Associative Model

Article By:



**Dr Sajith Vilambil, Associate Professor,  
Transfusion Medicine,  
Government Medical College, Trivandrum**

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a continuing universal disaster which was declared as a pandemic by World Health Organization in 2020. The role of blood transfusion services in any pandemic depends on the type of organism involved, potential of community spread, burden of disease, risk of transfusion transmissibility, blood product needs, inventory issues, logistics of functionality etc. Blood centres usually plan and prepare for a disaster based on experience from previous events. But COVID-19 is a pandemic with its own characteristics and unique features. However maintaining an adequate and safe supply of blood is the critical aim of blood centres during any disaster.

After two waves we are in a threat of third wave of covid pandemic. Blood supply chain is affected by a number of factors which may operate independently or influencing each other. Main factors include the availability of blood donors, feasibility of conducting blood donation camps, level of usage of blood components, availability of critical supplies etc. A smooth system for blood supply will depend on the model of blood transfusion services being followed and the responses of allied sections to such an event. Each segment in blood transfusion chain has its own role to play for ensuring adequate amount of blood products in blood centres. Thus, such a synchronised pattern is quite essential for smooth functioning of system.

### Role of Blood Centers and Regulatory Authorities

Blood safety is the cornerstone of transfusion science. Blood safety includes both blood donor and recipient safety and it is the primary concern with any of the transfusion services across the world. Blood centers have to play a pivotal role in coordinating the activities related to procurement of blood and management of inventory during these times. Multiple aspects have to be taken care of during organizing these services.

Blood donor recruitment is the main challenge that a blood center may face during a pandemic. In general, blood donor recruitment needs identification of healthy blood donors, mobilisation, special screening or deferral criterias, exemptions for blood donors during lockdown, use of social media for recruitment, other ICE activities, preregistration for blood donation, preparedness of donor organization etc.

The blood centres have to resolve issues related to reduction in the number of blood donors like difficulty in reaching blood centre due to lockdown and low availability of public conveyance, fear of donors about exposure to infection in hospital or blood centres, decrease in number of blood donation camps, deferral after covid infection or vaccination etc.

Strict coordination with voluntary blood donor agencies and other NGOs must be in practice. The awareness sessions will be transformed to the online sphere. Blood Centers must be in a position to make necessary arrangements for teams coming for in-house blood donation in a timely manner. If possible, the conveyance facility for camp teams should be arranged by the institution. Coordination of blood donation for avoiding overcrowding and meeting the needs must be purely based on logistics. If needed, the schedule of working hours of the blood center must be adjusted.

Though the corona virus is not transmitted through blood products, steps should be undertaken to screen the donor for evaluating any chance of current or past infection. For this, particular donor health history questionnaire must be drafted, specific questions should be asked, and the guidelines issued by government of India must be strictly adhered. Information on covid specific guidelines can be disseminated to donor agencies and public through online media.

COVID-19 protocols are to be strictly practiced in all blood centres; it includes hand washing, sanitization, social distancing, wearing masks, practice of cough etiquettes etc. The staff dealing with blood products should use protective and bio safety measures as directed by the government. The staff in the Blood Centre must be well trained in recent guidelines issued in relation to COVID-19. Directions for blood donors must be communicated properly either directly or through posters, leaflets etc.

There will be a paradigm shift from outdoor collection of blood to in-house collection. Scheduling of camps must be done tactfully. It must keep a balance to avoid overcrowding of donors or excess stock and inventory needs. The pattern of blood requirements may be changed during the extreme peaks of pandemic. Hospitals may turn into centres providing covid care alone. Thus there might be a rapid decrease in a routine surgical procedures and interventions, thereby decreasing the need for blood products. However treatment of emergencies, chronic illnesses, cancer etc. will be in place. So the need for blood products will be wavering according to change in patient admission and covid care.

Blood centres may also face increase in wastage due to shorter life span of near expiry blood components, difficulty in transportation of blood to other blood centre, less transfusion rate due to fear of transfusion transmissibility, decreased in number of elective cases etc. This has to be avoided to a certain extent by proper planning and execution of steps to meet demand and supply. Possibilities of increase in demand at the end of pandemic due to rescheduling of elective surgeries and procedure have to be managed.

Cleaning measures taken in the donation premises, food and the pantry facility for the staff etc. must be done according to on-going guidelines. Blood centre must have a clear policy on quarantine of staff as well as specific blood product management, if a blood donor turns covid positive soon after donation. Transfer of blood components between the various blood transfusion services gains its importance during pandemic times to avoid wastage and to meet demands. The disaster level control training must be in practice and team should be trained, sensitized and ready for any urgency.

Formulation of new guidelines, assistance for voluntary blood donation camps, interlinking of various departments related to voluntary blood donor activities etc. can be done by regulatory bodies.

## Role of Voluntary Blood Donor Organizations, NGOs related to VBD and Youth

Voluntary blood donor organisations play an important role in coordinating in-house and outreach voluntary blood donation camps, arranging awareness sessions, recruiting donors during emergencies etc. They strongly hold hands tight in managing the scarcity of blood with blood transfusion services. The new normal pattern during this pandemic time is forcing to reframe the structure and activities of voluntary blood donor agencies.

Each voluntary blood donor organization must enlist the donors under their leadership and details like blood group, contact numbers etc. must be with them. Donors must be kept in constant connection through online medias like WhatsApp or Telegram. There should be a mechanism to call them either in single or in small groups, whenever a blood center is facing scarcity of blood units.

During the times of intense spread of COVID-19, usually, outdoor blood donation camps are almost impossible. The inventory is maintained by a generous walk-in donor pool. The in-house or outdoor camps must be planned in accordance with the need of the blood center, existing covid protocol and other time to time directions from the government. A voluntary blood donor organization must play a bridging role between blood centers and common public. They should be well aware of specific guidelines released by government in relation to COVID-19. The information must be shared among their donor population in a regular manner.

Voluntary blood donor agencies can give clear advice and instructions to individual blood donors. ICE activities through media and social platforms must be there. Donors can take appointment letters prior to donation. Organisations which conduct camps must take all precautions for preventing spread of infection. They should be well communicated about procedural changes in blood centres. Utilisation of facilities like blood mobile, blood transportation van etc. can help in conducting the camps smoothly.

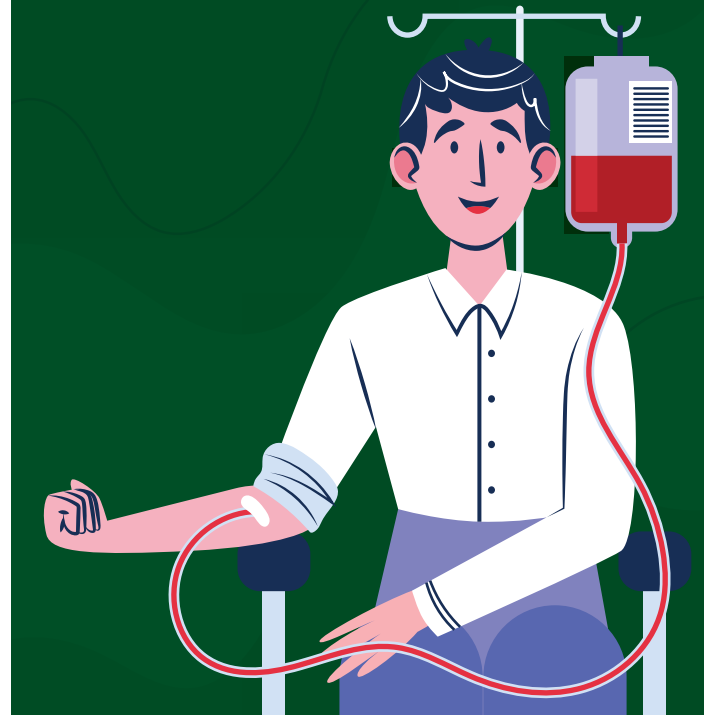
Blood donation drives to youth organizations like colleges, schools, clubs etc. were the main source of blood for managing the inventory in pre-covid era. Temporary closures of educational institutions and restrictions in travel have decreased the frequency of such outdoor camps. It has adversely affected the inventory management of each and every blood center. Students involved in NSS and other service activities were struck in houses and the teaching was mainly through online platform.

But currently the educational institutions are reopening and the activities are coming back to normal. Students must take care to resume voluntary blood donation camps along with their academic and extracurricular activities. This must be done in coordination with blood center team. In the times of crisis there should be a system for in-house donation for students, either in small groups or single. They must be well aware of the change in the patterns in blood collection and management of inventory. They can hold awareness sessions, either physical or online, and get sensitized in voluntary blood donation.

Activities related to Club 25 must be resumed. The youth clubs can restart their camps in association with Nehru Yuva Kendra and nearby blood centers. They can seek the assistance from NGOs or CSR funds of organizations. The administrative coordination from the side of youth can certainly help the issues related to blood scarcity.

To conclude, we have to note certain points. This pandemic is a unique situation. Still blood centres have to provide an uninterrupted supply of blood supply in need. It requires coordination from the top of the government to the common general public. Blood centres must have feasible plans which involve all the stakeholders. It has to balance shortage, wastage and supply of blood components in a cost-effective and practical manner.

### DONATE BLOOD SAVE LIFE



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## Letters To The Editor

"Wonderful edition"

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"Thank you, Baby! What an amazing blood donation campaign. Congratulations!"

Kristina Herman  
Director Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and CSR  
TERUMO Blood and Cell Technologies  
Lakewood

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"Dear sir,

We are from Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, Situated in Irugur, Coimbatore, we want to conduct a health camp at Irugur. Please share detail of the local team for conducting the health camp"

Thanks & Regards,  
NITESH KUMAR | AM HSSE|  
Mob:- 9542345719

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"Thanks Baby mam",

"Received and gone through the Bloodline Journal. Felt happy to be associated with a noble cause like saving and serving humanity through Blood Donation. Regards"

For Saral Enterprises, Jayant Umalkar

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"Thanks , I wonder how you keep me in loop still !"

Thanks  
Pushparaj

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" Dear Blood Line Team,  
Good morning and have a good day.

Thanks for sharing the BLOOD LINE The Voluntary Blood Donation Journal. Wishing you good luck for all the continuous publications .

Thanks once again".

Blood Donor Association, Nepal.

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" We take this privilege to express our gratitude for our long-standing relationship with you.

We would like to draw your kind attention that we are organizing the State Conference of WEST BENGAL VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONORS' FORUM at Tapoban Housing Tapoban City, Bamunara, Durgapur-12 from 7th to 9th January 2022.

The Conference will be devoted to the real cause of humanity, will explore the ways & means to strengthen the Voluntary Blood Donation program and will provide a platform to the Blood Donors, Motivators and resource persons along with many activists to learn, share, exchange and formulate strategies to organize more camps and collection of more blood units.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To you, we request: Your gracious presence as Guest of Honor and we obviously need your good wish messages for the memorable souvenir.

Moreover, we seek your permission to publish the two important write ups in our memorable souvenir which have been published in the Blood line Journal recently. Write ups are as follows "Voluntary blood donation - Safe blood saves life." (written by Dr. Divya V Senior Resident, Dept.of Transfusion Medicine, Govt Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram & published in the Blood line Journal 61 /2021) & another write up " IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICES" ( written by Dr.Jasmin A, SeniorResident, Department of Transfusion Medicine, Sree Gokulam Medical College and Research Foundation which is published in the Blood line Journal 61 /2021)

We are confident, you will respond to our appeal.  
With Best Regards, Yours Sincerely"

Kabi Ghosh  
Working President  
DURGAPUR SUB-DIVISIONAL VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONORS' FORUM  
West Bengal

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Dear sir,

We are sending you by post a couple of stickers. I request you to give some thought to have a better out reach to your voluntary blood donors. The sticker are a good and easy way to do some propaganda for your blood donor bags. I have spoken to a big hologram manufacturer in Chennai. As I had said, if every blood donor is given a sticker (hologram), to be used on his or her helmet, or on the wind shield of a car, as a matter of fact, this could be given to truck drivers, bullock carts and other vehicles. It could be a life saver, for eg:- a vehicle is parked on a lonely dark street or in some village where there is poor lighting. Imagine the publicity it can generate! it could be life saver. for eg a vehicle is parked on a lonely dark street or in some village ,where there is poor lighting. imagine the publicity it can generate. On the highways, if you are approaching a bullock cart from the rear side, you will not be able to see the reflection from the eyes of the bullock, but if a hologram is placed on the axle of the cart then the driver of the vehicle will be cautioned, thus avoiding an accident. As a matter of fact, we are planning to approach the RTO to help us in distribute these stickers, on heavy vehicles. We could do this under CSR. Do give some serious thought, and let us proceed further. I am eagerly waiting to get a copy of your blood line periodical, a copy of which I had seen in Rajkot Voluntary Blood Bank, Gujarat. Yours in the service of mankind.  
Regards...

Rtn Dr. Arun Gokuldas.  
Coimbatore

## Blood Donation Camp organized by TERUMO PENPOL in association with Muslim Association College of Engineering

TERUMO PENPOL in association with students and faculty of Muslim Association College of Engineering, organized a blood donation camp in association with Sree Rama Krishna Mission Hospital Blood Bank. The camp aimed to encourage the youth to step forward and donate blood as Trivandrum face a shortage of blood. Excuses never save lives but donating and contributing does. As an institution driven by values of being caring and compassionate, TERUMO PENPOL feel proud of the students for undertaking this healthcare cause which is the current need of the hour, along with spreading awareness about the importance of donating blood. Over 32 donors participated in the cause while strictly following the Covid-19 guidelines. NSS volunteers participated with zeal and enthusiasm in the camp.



## Blood Donation Camp in association Secondary Palliative Care, CHC Vellarada

Terumo Penpol in association with Secondary Palliative Care Unit, CHC Vellarada and Women and Children Hospital Thycaud organized a blood donation camp at the Health Center. Mr. Lal Krishnan, Block President, Perungidavila was the first donor for the camp. 21 donors donated at the camp. Women and Children Hospital, Thycaud provided technical support for the camp.

Blood donation is important, now more than ever, during this COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, we were challenged by cancellations of blood drives due to the initial business, school and travel restrictions to flatten the infection curve. Although the cancellation of elective surgeries resulted in a decrease in some hospital inventory ordering patterns, the need for blood and platelets remained due to their therapeutic roles in trauma and cancer management.

With the reopening phase in, the resumption of elective surgeries and procedures increased demand for blood products. However, at the same time, mitigation measures to prevent or decrease the spread of COVID-19 resulted in the erosion of both large and small blood drives along with continued cancellations of blood drives at businesses and schools due to social distancing protocols.



## This Patel Family Donated 1,238 Blood Units In 36 Yrs!!!

For this Patel family, whose eldest member is 80-year-old Rameshbhai, blood donation is a way of life.

Ever since their Guru gave them the mantra "blood is liquid love and let it flow in others", all the members of the family have become regular blood donors.

Ramesh Patel has donated blood 94 times and his wife Daksha 60 times. His younger brother Bharat Patel (60) has donated 126 units and his wife Shilpa 76 units. The third brother Ashok Patel has donated 89 bottles and his wife Shakuntala is a step ahead with 91 units. The youngest among the four, Bipin Patel, has donated 73 bottles and his wife 76 units.

The family started donating blood in 1985 and many of them have become centurion donors. Cumulatively, they have donated 1,238 bottles till now. Seven women have donated more than 50 times. Four of them are settled in the US and have organised blood camps to collect 2,000 units in the last four years.



On Sunday, the youngest member of the family Dr Maulin Patel (40) donated blood for the 100th time and became the youngest centurion donor of the state. All the donation camps are organised at Bharat Patel's residence. He told Mirror, "A healthy person can donate once in three months. People should come forward to donate blood and save lives."

His wife Shilpa aspires to become a centurion donor in due course of time.

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