

SHORT COMMUNICATION

SHORTAGE OF BLOOD! YOUTHS, THE TREND SETTERS, CAN THEY HELP TO MEET THE NEEDS?

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ABSTRACT

Need of Blood is very less as compare to potential blood donor population in India. Total population of India is 1190 million with a second largest in the world. The requirement of blood for the country is estimated to be 85 lakh to 1 crore units/year, whereas the available supply is only 74 lakh units/year. Blood has a very negative impact and considering as unfortunate even though it is life giving liquid to many. Awareness about blood donation is very limited among potential donors. A drastic strategy need to be adopted to educate community about importance of blood donation. Make them to realize that helping a needy not only by charity but by donating blood also. Student organizations should come forward to pledge to donate blood once or twice in a year that would help to meet the need in abundance. Students are the appropriate potential populations to recruit more blood donors to meet the needs comfortably.

Keywords: Voluntary blood donation, shortage, students' organizations

The amount of blood needed is very little when compared with the potential blood donor population in India. The total population of India is 1210 million, the second largest in the world ¹. However the current supply in India is only 74 Lakh units / year. The blood needs of the country are estimated to be 85 lakh to 1 crore units/year. WHO estimates that blood donation by at least 1% of the population is generally sufficient to meet a country's basic requirements for safe blood.²

A bold strategy needs to be adopted to educate the community about the importance of blood donation. We should make young people realize that donating blood to help a needy person more than charity. Moreover, we should emphasize that it is the social responsibility of every citizen to save fellow human beings. We should give out the messages that there is no need of a medical degree for a common person to save a life; instead if they donate blood they could save three lives not just one. Globally, most blood from voluntary blood donations is collected from outdoor camps, organized in educational institutions, industrial and commercial houses.³ According to a study more than one-third of the donor population is students ⁴. The student population is highly amenable to the idea of voluntary blood donation and it shows that the student population is very good in recruiting new blood donors and we could retain them for future success.

Education is the best way to approach students to support this noble cause. Education plays a major role

in making decisions to donate blood voluntarily. With respect to education of the respondents, it has been found that willingness to donate does increase significantly with higher levels of education ⁵. The importance of safe blood donation, the Indian scenario of demand and supply of blood and other topics related to safe blood donation could be introduced in curricula. Periodical awareness programmes and blood donation lectures in colleges at regular intervals will certainly increase knowledge of blood donation. Students should be made to understand that helping others is a social responsibility. This would improve altruistic tendencies, so that they can educate peer groups and the community about safe blood donation. Periodical voluntary blood donation drives / camps need to be organized in colleges and communities. Universities and colleges should motivate coordinators / camp organizers to conduct more blood donation camps at their institutions in order to support local blood banks. District heads and universities should appreciate colleges whose blood contribution is high by giving special recognition awards. Student groups like the National Service Scheme (NSS), National Cadet Corps (NCC), Youth Red Cross (YRC), Students Green Clubs (SGC) and Red Ribbon Club (RRC) are a few popular organizations that have proved their work in major community oriented services and uplifts. Universities and colleges are responsible to form these organizations in-house. Almost all students get a chance to enroll themselves in any one of these organizations. India's

working age population between 15 and 60 years is 610 million and the number of college graduates per year is 2 million. The number of pupils enrolled according to the WebPages of NSS and NCC are 2.6 million and 1.3 million respectively ^{6,7}. If at least half of them pledge to donate blood once or twice in a year, that would help to meet the need in abundance. Students are therefore a highly appropriate potential population in which to recruit more blood donors. People and students with a high sense of social responsibility could help in meeting patient needs. If a person volunteers himself to donate, he could actually help to save three lives. If a majority of the community volunteer themselves to donate, we would be able to meet the needs comfortably.

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