

Global Status Report on Blood Safety and Availability



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Preface

Blood is a vital health care resource used in a broad range of clinical services. In developed countries, transfusion is most commonly used for supportive care in cardiovascular and transplant surgery, massive trauma, and therapy for solid and haematological malignancies; in developing countries, on the other hand, it is more often used to treat pregnancy-related complications and severe childhood anaemia. Access to sufficient, secure supplies of blood and blood products and safe transfusion services is an essential part of any strong health system, and is an important component of efforts towards achieving the goal of universal health coverage. Blood can save lives, but can also be a vector for harmful infectious diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis. New pathogens are evolving and may pose additional threats to the safety and availability of blood supply, highlighting the importance of an effective surveillance and vigilance system for blood and transfusion safety at global and national levels.

Ensuring sufficient supplies of safe blood and blood products, and prevention of transmission of HIV, hepatitis and other transfusion-transmissible infections, are major public health responsibilities of every national government. Since 1975, the World Health Assembly has highlighted the global need for blood safety and availability through the adoption of several resolutions that have given greater priority to the issue within global and national health agendas. Key resolutions include WHA28.72, Utilization and supply of human blood and blood products (1975); WHA56.30, Global health-sector strategy for HIV/AIDS (2003); WHA58.13, Blood safety: proposal to establish World Blood Donor Day (2005); WHA63.12, Availability, safety and quality of blood products (2010); and WHA 67.6, Hepatitis (2014). These resolutions have also identified the guiding principles and essential elements for the development of sustainable national blood systems to meet the transfusion needs of all patients.

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