



Recent estimates suggest blood transfusion's contribution to new HIV infections in the region may be much lower" Morar et al (2016).

Abstract:

**BACKGROUND:** Historical estimates have attributed 5% to 10% of new human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to unsafe blood transfusions. Although frequently cited, the validity of this statistic is uncertain or outdated. Recent estimates suggest blood transfusion's contribution to new HIV infections in the region may be much lower.

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**STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS:** We searched the peer-reviewed and gray literature for quantitative estimates of the specific contribution of unsafe blood transfusion to the proportion of new HIV infections occurring in SSA. The sources and methods used to generate attribution estimates were evaluated against published country-specific HIV prevalence data.

**RESULTS:** Despite multiple secondary citations, a primary published source attributing 5% to 10% of new HIV infections to blood transfusions in SSA could not be established for the current era. The United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) modes of transmission

(MOT) reports representing 15 countries suggest that between 0 and 1.1% of new HIV infections per year (median, 0.2% or approx. two out of 1000 new infections each year) may be attributable to blood transfusions.

**CONCLUSION:** Recent modeled estimates suggest that blood transfusions account for a very low proportion of new HIV infections in SSA, likely an order of magnitude lower than 5% to 10%. Direct quantification of risk is challenging given the paucity of data on the variables that impact transfusion-associated HIV. Specifically, data on HIV incidence in blood donors, blood bank laboratory test performance, and posttransfusion surveillance are lacking. Findings suggest an urgent need for improved surveillance and modeling of transfusion-associated HIV transmission in the region.

Reference:

Morar, M.M., Pitman, J.P., McFarland, W. Bloch, E.M. (2016) The contribution of unsafe blood transfusion to human immunodeficiency virus incidence in sub-Saharan Africa: reexamination of the 5% to 10% convention. September 23rd. .

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