

Abstract:

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: Blood transfusion is inherently associated with risks, and little is known regarding the available quality and safety measures in developing countries. No studies or census has been carried out, and therefore, no data on this compelling issue are available.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: Data emanating from eight Arabic eastern/southern Mediterranean countries who responded to five surveys were collected and tabulated.

RESULTS: Asepsis during phlebotomy, screening for serological and immuno-haematological parameters and appropriate storage conditions are maintained across all countries. Variations in blood component processing exist. Universal leucoreduction is systematically applied in Lebanon. Nucleic acid testing is only performed in Egypt. Aphaeresis procedure, leucoreduction and quality control for blood components are virtually inexistent in Mauritania. Written donor questionnaire is absent in Algeria and Tunisia. Most donor deferral periods for infectious agents are inconsistent with international standards.

CONCLUSION: Gaps in the processing and in the quality/safety measures applied to the manufacture of blood components are quite evident in most eastern/southern Mediterranean countries. The decision of establishing an effective collaboration network and an independent body - aside from WHO - composed of specialists that oversees all transfusion activities in these countries is certainly a crucial step towards ensuring an optimum level of blood safety.

Reference:

Haddad, A., Elgemmezi, T., Chaïb, M., Bou Assi, T., Abu Helu, R., Hmida, S., Benajiba, M., Ba, K., Alqudah, M., Abi Hanna, P., Najjar, O. and Garraud, O. (2020) Quality and safety measures in transfusion practice: The experience of eight southern/eastern Mediterranean countries. *Vox Sanguinis*. March 2nd. doi: 10.1111/vox.12903. (Epub ahead of print).