



KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND AWARENESS REGARDING BLOOD DONATION AMONGST NURSES IN A LARGE GENERAL HOSPITAL

Immunohaematology

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ABSTRACT

Blood is vital organ that can be used for transfusion and transplantation in hospitals. The theme for world health Day in the year 2000 was "Blood saves life, Safe blood starts with me." In spite of numerous advances, no substitute is economical and easily available for blood. Transfusion of own blood i.e. autologous transfusion is the safest method but it can be done in only planned operations and not in emergencies. Also all patients may not be suitable for such transfusion. In our country large number of population falls between 18 and 60 years of age, still we have blood crisis because number of increasing road accidents, pregnancies, hematological diseases and other emergencies. Ward nurses are the mainstay of in-door patient care. Right attitude amongst nursing staff can encourage donors for voluntary blood donation. There have been very few studies regarding the knowledge, attitude and awareness regarding blood donation in this group. Our study aims to ascertain the knowledge, attitude and practices regarding blood donation amongst the nursing staff of a busy medical college in western India.

KEYWORDS

Knowledge, Attitude, Blood donation, Nurses

Blood is vital organ that can be used for transfusion and transplantation in hospitals. The theme for world health Day in the year 2000 was "Blood saves life, Safe blood starts with me." In spite of numerous advances, no substitute is economical and easily available for blood. Transfusion of own blood i.e. autologous transfusion is the safest method but it can be done in only planned operations and not in emergencies. Also all patients may not be suitable for such transfusion. In our country large number of population falls between 18 and 60 years of age, still we have blood crisis because number of increasing road accidents, pregnancies, hematological diseases and other emergencies.

In India, blood donation is still associated with apprehension and fear. It is associated with many traditional beliefs as well as attitudinal problems. Health care workers who form the face of the health care system, themselves are not whole heartedly supportive of blood donation.

There is also a risk of spread of many transfusion transmitted diseases due to unsafe blood transfusions. Blood will be safe if there is a nationally coordinated blood transfusion service and it should be collected only from voluntary non-remunerated donors.[1] Also it should be tested for transfusion transmitted diseases and only safe blood should be transfused.[1]

Ward nurses are the mainstay of in-door patient care. Right attitude amongst nursing staff can encourage donors for voluntary blood donation. There have been very few studies regarding the knowledge, attitude and awareness regarding blood donation in this group. Our study aims to ascertain the knowledge, attitude and practices regarding blood donation amongst the nursing staff of a busy medical college in western India.

METHODS:

Permission was obtained from the institute's ethical committee. A pretested data collection form was used for this study after obtaining oral informed consent from participants. A medical student was trained to fill the form. The data collection form was then circulated to all the staff nurses in the study. Two nurses who had queries regarding filling the questionnaire were clarified in meeting with the author. The study was completed between Feb-May 2012. Data was entered into Microsoft Excel and SPSS was used for analysis.

RESULTS:

Of the 325 nurses on roll, 311 could be contacted and of them 181

completed the questionnaire. 91% were female, their ages ranged from 23 to 58 years. Their qualification was B.Sc. Nursing.

Of the 181 responders, 8(4.4%) had received blood; 152(84%) had not while 3(1.7%) were not sure or did not respond. 19(10.5%) nurses had been recent voluntary non - remunerated donors while another 2(1.1%) had recently been a family replacement donor. 112(69%) had never donated blood but said they would if the need arose. However 47(26%) said they had never donated and had no intention to donate!

Of those who had donated, 14 Nurses had given blood designated for general public, 5 Nurses had done so for a family member in need. One had donated for autologous blood transfusion for herself. So nearly three fourths had done it as volunteers. One had done it for higher self appreciation; another had done to get her blood tested! 6/20 (30%) of donors had fear and /or apprehension while donating for the first time, in spite of being in the health care sector. The main fears were acquiring HIV or other infections (15%), fainting (10%), needle prick (10%) and pain (5%), uncertain (2%)

13/20 (65%) had donated only once, while one donated again after 4 months and 4(20%) again within the same year. Only 2(10%) had donated blood last year, while 6(30%) had donated in past 2-5 years and 11(55%) had donated > 5 years ago. 15(75%) reported they found the technicians and doctors who assisted their donation to be friendly. 19/21 (90%) found the environment to be friendly and conducive.

Amongst the relatives for whom the blood donation was done, 6 had donated for their parents and 2 for their children.

When we quizzed the nurses who had never donated blood, a vast majority 93(51.4 %) reported they had never been asked to donate blood and hence had not participated in it. The next common reasons were doctors advised against donation (11.61 %), worried about diseases (9.52%), unaware of importance of blood donation (6, 3.3 %), too busy in work routine (7.41 %).

Of those who never donated, 24(13.3 %) had been asked but had refused. 98(54.1 %) said they never had been asked / requested. Those who reported denial to donation even on request were asked the reasons for not doing so. 16(8.8%) were afraid of acquiring HIV or any other infection, 19(10.5%) feared damage to health, 13(7.2%) were afraid of fainting. After filling this questionnaire, 119(65.7%) reported they would donate blood if requested in future. 9 still refused, while 5 were not sure and 26 did not respond.

On being asked what would motivate them to donate, 70 (38.7%) said please ask me to donate. 47 said they would need more information – audio visual and reading material. Nearly 20% asked for a location and time. Nearly 100% said a prize would motivate them!! 31 were in favor of blood donation campaigns.

When asked why they would not wish to donate in future, 38(21%) put fear of HIV infection, 20(11%) fear of infecting someone else and 29(16 %) fear of learning their HIV status, 36(19.9 %) were afraid for their health while 11(6.1 %) were scared of the procedure.

Knowledge:

172(95%) of nurses were aware about blood groups and their details. All except 3 knew their blood groups. 147(81.2%) were aware that one could get infected with a disease by receiving blood. 169(93.4%) were aware regarding HIV transmission, 159(87.8%) regarding Hepatitis and 31(17.1%) regarding syphilis. But they were not very knowledgeable about frequency of donation. 5 thought you would donate every month. 130(71.8%) were correct at pointing to a three monthly interval while 27(14.9%) said every 6 months and 7(3.9%) annually. Nurses were not sure how old people may donate.

Many believed men should not donate! Similarly for old (115,63.5%). 119(65.7%) were sure that intravenous drug users and commercial sex workers should not donate, neither should the diseased (128,70.7%).

Attitude:

159 (87.8%) had a positive attitude to blood donation. Knowledge, culture and religion played a role in donating blood. Also important was absence of disease. 127 (70.2%) thought the best way to donate was as a voluntary non-remunerated donor. No one was for paid transfusions. But 53(40.3%) thought donors got something in return; only 25(13.8%) categorically said no.

82(45.3%) believed that donors received money, while 88(48.6%) thought it was food and 26(14.4%) gifts. 73(40.3%) thought moral satisfaction was more important. When asked what should be done to get more people to donate, 106(58.6%) reported information and 127(58.6%) mass media campaign.

Mass media campaigns information material was needed according to the nurses. According to some food, money a gifts would help.

Only 30% said nothing would happen to a donor, 53.6% thought something might. The donor may contract disease (37.6%), be weakened (59.1%) temporarily or lose health (27.1%). Most stressed the need for checking for infections before donation (129, 17.3%) and medical exam (107,59.1%) with single use equipment (101,55.8%) and offering food later(51.4%).

Communication Channels:

154(58.1%) had heard about blood donation through media but most could not remember the message. TV (124, 48.5%), Radio 103(56.9%) and written media 105(58%) were most common communication channels. Health settings were the other common source, 116(64.1%).

Banners, radio, TV and written media were through to best bet to improve donation rates.

DISCUSSION

Our results show that while ward nurses have a fair knowledge about blood donation, they nonetheless lack in certain areas. The willingness to donate is also low which speaks of uncertain attitudes to this life saving procedure. While nursing training emphasizes the importance and safety of the procedure, deep seated prejudice and lack of knowledge still prevents many nurses from becoming active promoters of this life saving donation.

The commonest cause for donation was altruism motive or as replacement donor for friend and family. The commonest cause for not donating was – no one asked us to donate. Overall nurses have a very positive attitude to blood donation. Donate blood, save lives is deeply etched in their minds. But certain barriers in knowledge and attitudes remain. This was found all over the world. Senior medical students had better knowledge than nursing and other paramedical staff. Amongst nurses it varies.

Blood donation on regular basis is associated with lower risk of

cardiovascular events and helps in fighting hemochromatosis. [1]

The study from Mangalore shows that significant number of nurses faltered in answering questions on the basic aspect of blood donation ($P < 0.00013$ in 3 parameters and $P = 0.00071$ in one). They proposed a short 4-6 hour crash course in blood donation and transfusion every 6 months.[2]

A study from Pakistan found that there were several misconceptions amongst armed forces personnel. They thought that those weighing > 60 kg could donate blood, that too once a year. [3] They reported that extra leave would be major incentive for blood donation. There too replacement donation was the most common form and not being asked the most frequent reason for not donating.[3]

A KAP study based on cluster random sampling from Yazd, Iran showed a direct relationship between knowledge and performance of blood donation donors were mostly men and middle aged with least knowledge and practice in women and young.[4] The most frequent reason for not donating was non-consideration; forget fullness and lack of time. People may feel fear of complication fear of hospital, false belief and religious traditions.[4]

Another study regarding awareness of attitudes towards blood donation in Kerman city in Iran amongst students.[5] There was no gender difference in attitudes but males were more aware than females. Better awareness was associated with positive attitude. Only one fourth students reported history of blood donation and their attitude and awareness was better than non-donors. Students had at least a bachelor degree and 95% were from mathematics, natural or human sciences background.[5]

Study from Gujarat shows that medical and physiotherapy students had greater awareness than nursing, dental and ayurvedic students.[6] A study by Olaiya et.al. from Nigeria, Africa mentions 93% reported personal gain as the most important motivational factor.[7]

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