

Developing a National Policy and Guidelines on the Clinical Use of Blood

Recommendations



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Preface

The World Health Organization Blood Transfusion Safety programme (WHO/BTS) was established to develop strategies for blood safety and promote them on a global, regional and national basis through advocacy and the provision of technical support to WHO Member States.

WHO/BTS has developed guidelines and recommendations based on World Health Assembly Resolution 28.72 of 1975, which urges Member States to develop national blood transfusion services based on voluntary non-remunerated blood donation. It also provides technical cooperation and assistance to Member States in the development of national blood programmes.

Safe and adequate supplies of blood are dependent on the implementation of an integrated strategy for blood safety:

- 1 The establishment of well-organized, nationally-coordinated blood transfusion service, with quality systems in all areas.
- 2 The collection of blood only from voluntary non-remunerated donors from low-risk populations.
- 3 The screening of all donated blood and blood products for transfusion-transmissible infections, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis viruses, syphilis and other infectious agents, and good laboratory practice in all aspects of blood grouping, compatibility testing, component preparation and the storage and transportation of blood products.
- 4 A reduction in unnecessary transfusions through the appropriate clinical use of blood and blood products, and the use of simple alternatives to transfusion, wherever possible.

WHO Recommendations on Developing a National Policy and Guidelines on the Clinical Use of Blood

Many Member States have established national blood transfusion services in accordance with WHO guidelines and recommendations. However, few countries have developed policies and guidelines on the clinical use of blood and blood products which are being effectively implemented at all levels of the health system. There are also wide variations in the approaches and content of national guidelines that currently exist.

WHO has therefore developed these Recommendations to assist Member States in developing, implementing and monitoring national policies and guidelines on the clinical use of blood and ensuring active collaboration between the blood transfusion service and clinicians throughout the management of patients who may require transfusion.

The Recommendations were drafted by an international expert group of blood transfusion and clinical specialists and were field-tested in a Workshop to Develop a National Policy and Guidelines on the Clinical Use of Blood in Honduras in March 1998.

The Clinical Use of Blood

To support these Recommendations, WHO has produced *The Clinical Use of Blood*, a set of comprehensive learning materials and a pocket handbook to aid prescribers of blood in the appropriate use of blood and blood products.

These materials have been designed to promote good transfusion practice in accordance with national guidelines on the clinical use of blood. They will form a valuable resource both in the development of national policies and guidelines and in the education and training of providers and prescribers of blood at all levels of the health care system.

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