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DONOR CARE AND RECOGNITION IS A STEP TO DEVELOP BLOOD DONATION HABIT AND RETURN BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

There are many determinants deciding the functioning of blood banks efficiently and effectively in order to meet its needs. Donor care and recognition is an important measure for genuine flow of the voluntary blood donors to blood banks to keep their shelves with full of stock all over the year. The determinants like process of donating blood, competent of Staff, time taken for blood donation, tidiness and cleanliness of facilities, post donation care, positive recognition and a word of appreciation would influence blood donors to return. The working hours of blood donation facility should have maximum hours in order to accept blood donors on their convenient time. Time option would be helpful to utilize facility at donors own time. Competent of a staff in venipuncture would be an added advantage. Time taken for blood donation is an important determinant to decide the repetition of blood donation. A pleasant and positive experience promotes safe blood donation and donor return behaviour.

Key words: Donor care and recognition, Competent of Staff, Word of appreciation, blood donor return behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Recruitment and retention of new blood donors is an important task for blood bank personnel to attain self-sufficiency of blood and blood products ¹. Availability of blood and blood products for needy patients has been a social problem for a long time. Converting first-time donors to become regular donors continues to be a challenge for blood banks ². Blood banks aim at sourcing safe regular voluntary blood donors, fully aware of transfusion transmissible infections and committed to providing safe blood to recipients. Blood banks urge everyone to respond to the needs of patients so they can increase the stock and able to meet the demand of patients across the country.

There are many determinants deciding the efficient and effective functioning of a blood bank to meet its needs. Donor care and recognition is an important measure to increase the flow of voluntary blood donors to blood banks to keep their shelves with full of stock all over the year. Determinants like the process of donating blood, competent staff, time taken for blood donation, tidiness and cleanliness of facilities, post donation care, positive recognition and a word of appreciation would influence blood donors to develop blood donation habit and blood donor return behaviour.

The time needed to make a blood donation is an important determinant of repeat donations. Time spared for a noble cause by an individual is valuable and precious. Most of voluntary blood

donors may come from their work, studies or important business and they may not be able to wait for a long time. The altruistic behavior of the donor should be recognized and honored by giving the donor priority while collecting blood. Negative impacts on a donor will not promote the concept of blood donation. A pleasant and positive experience improves safety and satisfaction about the donation. Long queuing times might actually prevent donors from donating in the future ³.

The working hours of the blood donation facility should be maximized in order to accept blood donors at the donors' convenient time. Timing options are helpful to enable donors to use the facility at a time convenient to them. Availability of medical and paramedical staff, donation beds, blood bags and refreshments avoid unnecessary delay in attending to voluntary blood donors. Blood banks that practice both the voluntary and replacement blood donor system should as a priority provide beds exclusively for voluntary blood donors. This enables voluntary blood donors to donate blood immediately without waiting long and eliminates hassles among replacement donors.

Competent staff in venipuncture is an added advantage. Reactions and fainting during donation creates an unpleasant experience. The stressful experience of phlebotomy is because of for the higher frequency ⁴ of reactions among donors. Donor reactions have the most negative impact on the blood donor return rates ⁵. Efforts to improve perceptions of the donation experience ⁶ ensure donor return behavior. A friendly approach from blood bank staff can ease the tension, fear and anxiety of a first time donor. A word of appreciation to donors makes them feel proud about themselves. This ensures a commitment to social responsibility and obligations among donors.

Donor recognition differs from blood bank to blood bank recognition of voluntary blood donors need not necessarily be in the form of monetary

benefits. It could be a letter of appreciation, a blood group card, a certificate, a badge, a thank-you card, or a seasonal greetings card. Honoring donors at the public functions and donors' 'get-togethers' and inviting the donors' family to a 'get-together' can also create a silent motivation among the relatives. Recognition awards act as an incentive to blood donors and camp organizers and motivate many new potential blood donors to become regular voluntary and repeat blood donors.

Recognition and providing donor care for all the blood donors irrespective of their status may develop a good rapport between blood banks and donors. Providing pre and post-donation care is an important determinant of rapport among blood donors. A few donors may feel dizzy and faint due to fear and anxiety. Rest and small refreshment may be helpful to donors after their donation. Providing information on do's and don'ts, well in advance to blood donors will avoid any untowardness or syncopal reactions. Observing others, fainting produces a reduction in the number of future donations for occasional donors ⁷.

A word of appreciation would help to enhance a positive attitude among blood donors. This would encourage a volunteer to not only donate blood regularly but also to motivate peer groups and relatives to become volunteers. Some of them could become ambassadors in recruiting new donors even after their retirement due to age or some other health criterion. Retired donors may still be helpful in recruiting new donors or in organizing voluntary blood donation camp in their localities.

Organizing and conducting periodic donor meetings is an important measure in recognizing the humane service, social gesture and humanitarian act of donors. Invitations to donors' families and their friends are compulsory for those meetings. Friendly discussions, feedbacks and close interactions among blood donors develop a friendly network among them. These

will influence relatives and friends of donors to convert or become themselves regular blood donors.

Practicing universal standards for blood collection and all screening procedure by using disposable syringes and needles ensures the safety of donors from any communicable diseases. Understanding the myths and misconceptions of a first time donor is important. It is to be carefully evaluated so all doubts are cleared. A donor should trust the process and understand that they will not get any infection after the donation. Donors' trust is equally important in maintaining a donor flow successfully throughout the year.

Providing blood group cards and blood-borne viral test results should be compulsory. This will help donors to know their status for any infectious diseases if they have any. However, this would help donors to self-exclude or withdraw from blood donation if they have suspicion about themselves for any untold reasons. Self-exclusion or withdrawal for any suspicious reason would prevent transfusion-transmitted infections (TTIs).

Donor selection criteria that include pulse and blood pressure, donor's weight and total blood volume, minimum hemoglobin and donation interval⁸ should be followed uniformly by blood banks. Donors whose services have been used by different blood banks can be put off by lack of uniformity in the process of blood collection and may hesitate to donate even in an emergency. Uniformity in blood collection and a friendly network in transporting blood should be encouraged between blood banks if their stocks are more than their usage. Uniformity of blood collection helps the donors to understand the process easily, and a friendly network in transporting excess blood between blood banks can cater to all patient needs in time and would minimize blood wastage. Steady increase of blood donors is a good sign for healthy development of a blood bank. The blood bank

staff should be able to promote their concept and ideas to motivate donors to donate blood regularly.

CONCLUSION

To conclude that there are many determinants such as, process of donating blood, competent of staff, time taken for blood donation, tidiness and cleanliness of facilities, post donation care, positive recognition and a word of appreciation would influence blood donors to return and decides the functioning of blood banks efficiently and effectively in order to meet its needs"

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