



XXI PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE

XXXIV REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICES

Blood transfusion has long been recognized as a therapeutic tool in the provision of medical care, and the availability, accessibility and safety of this service can serve to measure the level of medical care of a country.

While it is recognized that many countries in the Region of the Americas already provide good blood transfusion services, there is, nevertheless, evidence to suggest that effective blood transfusion services are not universally available throughout the Region.

Although the requirement for blood transfusion in the Americas may vary from country to country, such services are essential for the management of hereditary anemias, trauma, major surgery, postnatal hemorrhage and in disaster preparedness.

In 1975, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution (WHA28.72) urging Member States to promote the development of national transfusion services and enact effective legislation governing their operation. (See Annex A.) Subsequently, the World Health Organization published "The Collection, Fractionation, Quality Control and Uses of Blood and Blood Products. (WHO Geneva (1981))

Although comprehensive national blood transfusion services are essential to the goal of health for all by the year 2000, no specific mention is made of the requirement in the Regional Strategies for HFA/2000 (Official Document 173).

An Advisory Meeting on Planning of National Services of Blood Transfusion was held in Bogota, Colombia, 3-5 February 1981. This meeting was organized by PAHO, WHO, the League of Red Cross Societies, the Colombian Ministry of Health, and the Colombian Red Cross. The recommendations arising from the deliberations of the Advisory Meeting are as follows:

1. That governments include "a national blood program" for which the aid of national and international agencies and organizations will be necessary.
2. All aspects relating to blood must be regulated, controled, financed and operated by the State and perhaps, in certain cases, by State-controlled but non-profitmaking organizations.
3. The sound operation of national blood programs required that the State approve and promulgate the necessary laws, decisions and regulations to govern every activity concerned with blood and its components, from its acquisition until its utilization, so as to ensure maximum safety for donor and recipient and the provision to the entire population of the country of the said components in sufficient quantity and appropriate quality.
4. To achieve these aims the State will need to create "National Advisory Committees" composed of professionals qualified in the specialty and representatives of institutions connected with the activity, to promote voluntary, unpaid blood donation.

The above four recommendations should be implemented before the year 1985.

In order to implement these recommendations, the Advisory Meeting considered it essential that all levels of health manpower be trained, and a study be conducted by experts to select appropriate geographical locations for the establishment of regional centers for the production of blood derivatives for diagnostic and therapeutic use. The Advisory Meeting also made recommendations for the establishment of National Blood Organizations; recommended that WHO/PAHO implement and standardize techniques for the handling of blood and its components; and that WHO/PAHO use their good offices to promote national adoption of the International Society of Blood Transfusion's Code of Ethics. An extract from the report, containing the recommendations of the Advisory Meeting is included as Annex B.

The International Society of Blood Transfusion has developed a Code of Ethics for Blood Donation and Transfusion which has received formal approval from:

- The International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations (I.F.O.D.S.), Madrid, June 1982.
- League of Red Cross Societies, General Assembly, Manila, 1981.
- XXIV International Conference of the Red Cross, Manila, 1981.

One vehicle for improving the effectiveness of blood transfusion services in developing countries in the Americas is the Regional Strategy for the extension of the coverage of health services (4.2) and, more specifically, the expansion of installed capacity (4.2.1.4). Equally as important as vehicles are the Regional Strategies for the availability and production of critical supplies and equipment (4.6), training and use of human resources (4.7), international cooperation (4.9), and technical cooperation among developing countries (5.5).

The approach to the problem of developing common norms, and establishing and maintaining effective blood transfusion services throughout the Region of the Americas, is undoubtedly complex. However, a considerable amount of work has already been done by PAHO in cooperation with the various national and international organizations already active in the field. Notwithstanding, a great deal of work is still required to develop and establish blood transfusion services throughout the Region and, in view of the essential need for such services in many of the developing countries of the Americas, more proactive steps would seem to be necessary.

The approach suggested to Member Countries of the Organization is to accept the requirement for effective blood transfusion services within the context of health for all by the year 2000 and for the Conference to establish the necessary goal or goals for the achievement of the objective by a resolution that would also propose that an appropriate methodology be developed to survey and capture the necessary data on the status of blood transfusion services in the countries of the Region; assess the requirement of each Member Country; and propose appropriate methods to assist countries to develop services that are appropriate to their needs and capacities.

Annexes

BLOOD AND BLOOD PRODUCTS

WHA28.72 The Twenty-eighth World Health Assembly.

Conscious of the increasing use of blood and blood products;

Having considered the information provided by the Director-General on the utilization and supply of human blood and blood products;

Bearing in mind resolution XVIII of the XXII International Conference of the Red Cross;

Noting the extensive and increasing activities of private firms in trying to establish commercial blood collection and plasmapheresis projects in developing countries;

Expressing serious concern that such activities may interfere with efforts to establish efficient national blood transfusion services based on voluntary nonremunerated donations;

Being aware of the higher risk of transmitting diseases when blood products have been obtained from paid rather than from voluntary donors, and of the harmful consequences to the health of donors of too frequent blood donations (one of the causes being remuneration),

1. THANKS the Director-General for the actions taken to study the problems related to commercial plasmapheresis in developing countries;

2. URGES Member States:

(1) to promote the development of national blood services based on voluntary nonremunerated donation of blood;

(2) to enact effective legislation governing the operation of blood services and to take other actions necessary to protect and promote the health of blood donors and of recipients of blood and blood products;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to increase assistance to Member States in the development of national blood services based on voluntary donations, when appropriate in collaboration with the League of Red Cross Societies;

(2) to assist in establishing cooperation between countries to secure adequate supply of blood products based on voluntary donations;

(3) to further study the practice of commercial plasmapheresis including the health hazards and ethical implications, particularly in developing countries;

(4) to take steps to develop good manufacturing practices specifically for blood and blood components in order to protect the health of both donors and recipients; and

(5) to report to the World Health Assembly on developments in these matters.

PANAMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

ADVISORY MEETING ON THE
PLANNING OF NATIONAL SERVICES OF BLOOD TRANSFUSION

Held in Bogotá from 3 to 5 February 1981

Organized by the:

Panamerican Health Organization,
World Health Organization,
League of Red Cross Societies,
Colombian Ministry of Health,
Colombian Red Cross.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE MEETING:

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerning the "Planning of a comprehensive blood transfusion service as part of the national programme to achieve health for all by the year 2000".

1. That governments include "a national blood programme" for which the aid of national and international agencies and organizations will be necessary.
2. All aspects relating to blood must be regulated, controlled, financed and operated by the State and perhaps, in certain cases, by State-controlled but non-profit-making organizations.
3. The sound operation of national blood programmes requires that the State approve and promulgate the necessary laws, decisions and regulations to govern every activity concerned with blood and its components, from its acquisition until its utilization, so as to ensure maximum safety for donor and recipient and the provision to the entire population of the country of the said components in sufficient quantity and appropriate quality.
4. To achieve these aims the State will need to create "National Advisory Committees", composed of professionals qualified in the speciality and representatives of institutions connected with the activity, to promote voluntary, unpaid blood donation.

The above four recommendations should be implemented before the year 1985.

5. In order to attain the proposed objectives it is essential to establish projects for training of manpower at all levels. This goal should be achieved before the year 1990.
6. It is essential to rationalize the production of blood derivatives for diagnostic and therapeutic use, as well as ensuring the necessary inputs with the establishment of regional centres for better utilization of the existing resources. To this end, it is recommended that a study be conducted by experts from national and international agencies to select the most appropriate geographical areas. This goal should be attained before the year 1985.
7. A first evaluation of these recommendations should be carried out in 1983.

With regard to national policies concerning blood programmes, control of blood products, good practice and ethics, the following recommendations are made:

1. To promote the establishment in each country of a National Blood Organization attached to the supreme health authority of the respective country and having the following general functions:
 - (a) Formulating and implementing a national blood programme with well-defined goals and appropriate strategies;
 - (b) Regulating, co-ordinating and supervising all activities connected with the blood programme;
 - (c) Acting as liaison body in the relevant field with other countries and with competent international bodies.
2. To recommend to the governments of participating countries that blood donation should be voluntary and unpaid;
3. To take promotional action in order that blood, its components and its fractions should not be marketed for profit;
4. To suggest to WHO/PAHO that it implement and standardize at regional level techniques for the handling of blood and its components and fractions, and encourage each country to adopt them in full;
5. To recommend to countries which have no specific legislation on blood and its components and derivatives that they give priority to enacting it;
6. To advise countries whose legislation is out-of-date, on supplementing and updating it;
7. To recommend to countries where there exists legislation not properly applied that it be rapidly put into effect;
8. To request WHO/PAHO and LORCS to use their good offices in order that the International Society of Blood Transfusion's code of ethics for donation and transfusion be accepted as philosophical framework for all legislation and regulations adopted by the countries of the world;
9. As all activities concerned with blood are of public interest and of major social concern, we recommend a study by the bodies sponsoring this meeting and the countries of the continent of possible solutions to the problems involved in utilization of blood and its components and derivatives:
 - (a) Which would enable the necessary resources and equipment to be acquired at reasonable cost;

- (b) Standardization of quality control of materials so as to ensure that the products acquired are of adequate quality;
 - (c) Advocacy or promotion of policies, of genuine self-sufficiency in each country or region;
 - (d) Exchange of technical and scientific information to enable staff to keep abreast of advances, together with programmes of continuing education and of basic and refresher training, at the technical and professional levels.
10. Blood is not a priority item in the majority of disasters, and it is accordingly recommended to the governments and authorities of each country that, in case of emergency, they request assistance after first evaluating the needs.
11. As a first step towards harmonizing plans for a genuine blood programme in each country that does not have its own infrastructure, we propose the creation in such countries of a national committee to achieve this objective.

With regard to technical co-operation in the regions and subregions the following measures are recommended:

1. The establishment of a haemotherapy reference centre, which should be the centre best equipped to fulfil one or more of the following functions: policy-making, information, training, diagnosis and research. Each country should designate one or more national reference centres for the purpose of promoting the development of programmes for haemotherapy services, in order to carry out the established functions.
2. With regard to the Regional Reference Centre, it is recommended to governments that they request WHO/PAHO to carry a survey of all the Latin-American National Reference Centres with a view to designating it. It is also recommended that the said governments designate and put into operation the "National Reference Centres" within a maximum period of two years (1981-1983) and for the "Regional Reference Centre" a maximum period of five years (1981-1986).

In accordance with the modern principle in transfusion therapy of "giving the patient what he really needs", the following recommendations are made:

- (a) To use whole blood only in cases where it is necessary, utilizing instead the components enumerated hereunder: concentrate of erythrocytes, normal plasma, frozen fresh plasma, platelets, cryoprecipitate, leucocytes, etc.

- (b) With regard to other plasma fractions, such as albumin, gamma-globulins, Factor VIII, fibrinogen, etc., we suggest that the countries which have suitable technology and installations perform the fractionation and that those which do not possess them request international agencies such as WHO/PAHO and the Red Cross to conduct a feasibility study for the establishment of a processing plant utilizing surpluses of plasma obtained from different countries under intergovernmental agreements to prevent marketing of plasma for profit.
- (c) With regard to reagents for blood banks, we propose the same solutions recommended for fractionation of plasma.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS AND GUARANTEES

We recommend that, in the production of reagents for blood banks, the standards laid down by WHO or recognized scientific organizations be applied.

It is recommended that programmes of quality control be implemented at the Reference Centres.

The closing meeting was held at 5 p.m. on 5 February and was attended by Dr. Luz Uribe Naranjo, Secretary General of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Luis Alberto Valle, WHO/PAHO Adviser, Dr. Francis Lothe, of WHO, Dr. Gaston Tawil, of PAHO, Dr. Guillermo Rueda Montaña, President of the Colombian Red Cross, and all the delegates and advisers.

A full report of the meeting is available in LAB/HQ in Spanish.
