

Transfusion Matters



Blood and Transplant

SPRING 2013
11th EDITION

Patient Involvement and Empowerment

"The patients must be the first priority in all of what the NHS does" (Francis, 2013)



Involving patients in transfusion is an important element in achieving patient-centred care. 'Patient empowerment' may be defined as 'an individual being an active member of their care management team' (Santurri, 2006)

Patient empowerment does not just encompass the ability of the patient to make decisions and be active in their care; it also involves their education on the topic. As healthcare professionals it is our responsibility to provide an environment where patients feel comfortable to ask questions about their care and share decisions in treatment options. For many patients this approach is a significant change from the traditional 'medical model' which they are familiar with; they may therefore require support and encouragement to express their views and concerns. That said, while we strive to involve patients, we must also respect that some patients may decide to opt out of taking control of all, or parts, of their care. Other factors which may affect their involvement include culture, language, age, prior experiences of hospital care and how they have been affected by illness. With this in mind, patients should be informed of the proposal to transfuse and their valid informed consent obtained.

Clinical staff need to be confident discussing transfusion with patients, which may require further education on their own part. They must recognise that involvement and consent are a patient's right, as well as a professional obligation.



Welcome to the 11th edition of Transfusion Matters; produced for hospital staff by NHS Blood and Transplant's (NHSBT) Patient Blood Management (PBM) team (previously known as the Better Blood Transfusion team).

The primary role of the PBM team is to support clinical colleagues in raising awareness of transfusion topics among staff in hospitals. Transfusion Matters is one of several initiatives to help share information promoting patient involvement and empowerment.

This edition will focus on the requirements for patient consent for transfusion, available patient information resources and the "Do you know who I am?" patient empowerment campaign.

If you have any comments regarding this edition please email either of the editors:

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Patient Information Leaflets

Patient information leaflets (PILs) are an important tool to help involve patients in their treatment and assist in achieving valid consent. When provided in a timely manner they allow patients to consider information, especially as explanations can be easily forgotten or misunderstood due to anxiety or unfamiliar language. NHSBT have produced a number of PILs, which are available free of charge from: www3.access-24.co.uk (login and password details are available from your hospital's Transfusion Practitioner). Alternatively they can be downloaded (including several alternative language versions) from: <http://hospital.blood.co.uk>



Consent for Blood Transfusion

In 2011, the Department of Health's Advisory Committee for the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) produced a report '*Patient Consent for Blood Transfusion*'. This included 14 recommendations relating to all aspects of consent, including clinical practice, governance, patient information and healthcare practitioners' education.

www.gov.uk

Why did SaBTO make these recommendations?

- Patients are not always given information on the risks, benefits and alternatives to transfusion or the right to refuse transfusion
- Patients are not always made aware that they have received a transfusion
- Patients who are unaware that they have received a transfusion may go on to donate blood when they should not
- There is inconsistent practice across the UK.

What is 'Valid Consent'?

Valid consent can be defined as 'an ongoing agreement by a person to receive treatment, undergo procedures or participate in research, after the risks, benefits and alternatives have been adequately explained to them' (DH, 2009). It is a general, legal and ethical principle that valid consent should be obtained from a patient before they are treated.

How should consent for transfusion be recorded?

Valid consent for blood transfusion (red cells, platelets, fresh frozen plasma, cryoprecipitate and/or granulocytes) should be documented in the patient's clinical record by the healthcare professional. The patient does not need to give written consent. Trusts and other healthcare providers should have policies and procedures in place that explain how consent is gained and recorded within their organisation. It is also recommended that transfusions are recorded within discharge summaries.

Healthcare professionals should consider long-term multi-transfused patients (eg haemoglobinopathy or haematology patients) as they will require update information and regular review of consent for the transfusions they receive. Details of consent requirements for these patients should be explicit within your local transfusion policy.

What if the patient cannot consent prior to the transfusion?

Patients who have received a blood transfusion and who were not able to give valid consent prior to the transfusion (eg emergency transfusions or where the patient is unconscious) should be provided with information retrospectively. Information provided retrospectively should include advice that they will no longer be eligible to donate blood and this should also be documented in the patient's clinical record. To support this process a new patient information leaflet is being produced and will be available soon.

What additional resources has SaBTO developed to help support consent for blood transfusion?

- An action plan to support the delivery of these recommendations
- A standardised information resource for clinicians, indicating the key issues to be discussed by the healthcare professional when obtaining valid consent from a patient for a blood transfusion
- A good practice guidance document to help identify the most effective way of providing information retrospectively when patients were unable to give prior consent.

These resources are available at:

www.transfusionguidelines.org.uk/index.asp?Publication=BBT&Section=22&pageid=7691

What educational resources are available to help healthcare professionals?

LearnBloodTransfusion is a nationally recognised e-learning package covering many aspects of blood transfusion. As a direct result of the SaBTO recommendations, this e-learning package now includes a consent module to help healthcare professionals gain the knowledge and expertise needed to ensure valid consent is obtained. See: www.learnbloodtransfusion.org.uk/

Remember:

Documented valid consent is required for blood transfusion.

Patient awareness and empowerment

'Do you know who I am?' – a campaign to empower patients to challenge staff before blood transfusion takes place.

NHSBT is promoting a back to basics approach where patients are being encouraged to ask healthcare professionals 'Do you know who I am?'. Patient identification is especially important prior to taking a blood sample or starting a blood transfusion. Patients must be asked to state their full name and date of birth, which is checked against the appropriate transfusion documentation. All patients undergoing transfusion must wear an accurate identification band (or risk assessed equivalent).

Patient identification continues to be a critical point in the transfusion process as there is the potential for serious error. This campaign is designed to raise awareness of the importance of positive patient identification in the blood transfusion process amongst both healthcare professionals and patients.

Resources for the campaign are available to order from: www3.access-24.co.uk (login and password details are available from your hospital's Transfusion Practitioner). Alternatively they can be accessed via: www.transfusionguidelines.org/Index.aspx?Publication=NTC&Section=27&pageid=982

Right Patient, Right Blood



What does this mean for you?

Documented valid consent is required for every transfusion. When this is not possible, patients should be provided with information retrospectively. The process of involving patients in their care, informing them of the risks, benefits and alternatives to transfusion and then obtaining their consent to treatment (including the right to refuse) should be a routine part of clinical care. Staff involved in any stage of the transfusion process must accept responsibility and accountability for the care of the patient, even if not actually authorising or administering the transfusion. Further guidance on general consent is available from both the General Medical Council (GMC) and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

Wordsearch:

Blood
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Documented
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Informed
Involvement
Patient
PILs
Practice
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SaBTO
Transfusion

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Santurri L. (2006) Patient Empowerment: improving the outcomes of chronic diseases through self-management education. MPHP 439 Online Text Book, Case Western Reserve University
www.case.edu/med/epidbio/mphp439/Patient_Empowerment.htm?nw_view=1364910292 (last accessed 02.04.2013)

Additional copies of this edition and the resources mentioned within are available to order at:
www3.access-24.co.uk. Login and password details are available from your hospital's Transfusion Practitioner.