Dear Colleague

18 July 2019

To: Transfusion Laboratory Managers, Transfusion Practitioners, Chairs of HTC and Consultant Haematologists served by NHSBT

O D Negative Blood Stocks

Over the last year we have seen an increase in demand for O D negative red cells. From June 2018 to June 2019, O D negative demand increased by 2.7% whilst overall red cell demand decreased by 5.8%.

I know you will appreciate that the supply of O D negative is an ongoing challenge: only 7% of the population are group O D negative, yet demand is approx. 13.3% and issues 14.5%. The difference between demand and issues is widening as a result of the challenges in the supply of Ro blood for specific patient groups and we are working to address this.

The National Blood Transfusion Committee has today published updated guidance regarding the use of O D negative red cells. You can find the guidance document here.

With regard to stock management, we would be grateful if you could consider these key points from the guidance document as highlighted below and change practice, if required, accordingly:

- Review your stock levels aiming for O D negative stocks as a percentage of total red cell stock of 12.5% or less.
- Aim for minimal wastage of O D negative red cells of at least less than 4% of total O D negative stock.
- For emergency use, consider stocking O D negative units for use in women and O D positive/K+ units for males and women ≥50 years old. Prioritise usage of O D negative K- units for women < 50 years old. Risk assess usage of O D positive blood for male patients and women ≥50 in pre-hospital care.

If you have any questions or would like further information or support, please contact your Patient Blood Management Practitioner or Customer Service Manager. Alternatively phone our Response Desk on 0208 201 3107, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Thank you in anticipation of your help in ensuring that we are able to continue to meet the needs of patients requiring O D negative blood and to avoid potential future shortages.

Please cascade this communication to laboratory and clinical staff as appropriate.

Kind regards

Catherine Howell OBE
Chief Nurse Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services
NHS Blood and Transplant