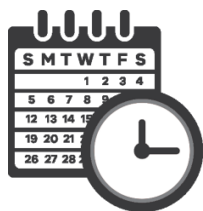


Blood Matters on the Bench and Beyond

Issue 5 – February 2021

Welcome to the Blood Matters newsletter for Scientists. It will be distributed throughout the year to share information that may be helpful to you, and to let you know of upcoming activities which may be of interest.



Emergency transfusion in newborns

Wednesday 24 February 2020, 11.00am – 12.00pm

Virtual meeting via Webex

Registration is required – [Click here to register](#)

Presentations by:

- A/Prof Michael Stewart, Director Paediatric Infant and Perinatal Retrieval (PIPER)
- Dr Helen Savoia, Laboratory Manager
- Mary Comande, Senior Scientist, Blood Bank

from The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne.

This will include the requirements for neonatal transfusion, and considerations in an emergency situation. There will be time for questions from participants at the conclusion of the presentations.

'STOP the waste' festive campaign 2020-21

We are midway through the 2020-21 festive campaign and the average Victorian wastage rate is at an all-time low of 1.4% (November and December 2020). This is an outstanding result, and we applaud all your efforts in keeping wastage to a minimum.

As anticipated there has been an increase in activity at many organisations throughout this period. Please remember to monitor changes to activity within your organisation which may impact on blood use and adjust the inventory accordingly.

Donated blood is a precious gift, and we all need to do our part to protect and manage this valuable resource. Let's continue to ensure we keep blood wastage to a minimum over this period.

Your continued support of the 'STOP' the waste' campaign is appreciated.

Ordering of Kell negative red cells

Following on from Lifeblood's ongoing work regarding the ordering of Kell negative red cells. Requests for Kell negative red cells for specific patients must be ordered using the BloodNet Special Order template if they cannot be sourced from your own stock.

Lifeblood has a responsibility to provide an equitable supply of Kell negative red cells to all customers. As such, inventory is triaged to ensure that they can provide Kell negative units to patients with defined clinical indications as per the [ANZSBT Guidelines for Transfusion and Immunohaematology Laboratory Practice](#) and the [Consensus statement on use and allocation of Kell negative red cells](#).

The ANZSBT supported by the National Blood Transfusion Committee (NBTC), believe a mixed inventory of Kell positive and negative units, reflecting the local population distribution of the antigen, can

be managed effectively without unnecessary red cell wastage if appropriate patient selection and/or Kell phenotyping is employed.

Please contact your local Lifeblood Transfusion Scientist for further information.

Dispensing SCIg in BloodNet

We would like to thank you all for the work you do in ordering and dispensing subcutaneous immunoglobulin (SCIg) products via BloodNet. This is an essential service in enabling patients to administer this treatment option from the comfort and convenience of home.

The SCIg Access Program through the Victorian Department of Health is supporting health services offer SCIg by providing funding per patient per quarter.

The data used to determine the funding to health services is provided by the National Blood Authority and extracted from BloodSTAR through BloodNet. Data is provided to the Department of Health quarterly and then health services receive funding accordingly.

Accurate funding is dependent on the SCIg dispensed episodes being entered into BloodNet as close to real time as possible. **It is essential for the funding purposes of SCIg that any data is entered into BloodNet no later than 2 weeks after the end of each quarter.** Any entries after this time frame will result in those patients not appearing in the Department of Health data, and therefore will affect the funding to the health service.

Please assist health organisations receive their allocated funding by ensuring all SCIg dispensing occurs in a timely manner.

RMIT Laboratory Support

2020 has been a year like no other, and has resulted in a revised program for our RMIT Bachelor of Biomedical Science (Laboratory Medicine) students. Through the dedication of the educators, a modified program was introduced this year which has enabled the students to continue with their studies despite restrictions. As you know, having the hands-on experience of working within a laboratory, learning how to interact with colleagues and on-the job intuition are very difficult concepts to instruct without real-life experiences.

It has been a very difficult period for all of us, and our RMIT students have the added anxiety of entering the workforce without having had the usual laboratory placement period.

These students are our scientists of the future and any investment into their laboratory experience will benefit our profession as a whole. Let's unify and collaborate to provide whatever support and guidance we can to assist our incoming new graduates.

Think about how your laboratory can assist them:

- Videos of laboratory workflow and practice – explaining processes and procedures
- Interesting or complex case studies
- Work experience placements
- Any other suggestions that can help our RMIT graduate scientists enter the workforce with confidence

Please contact Roula.Kyriacou@rmit.edu.au with how you can help or for further information.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Cindy O'Malley who retired at the end of 2020. Her commitment to education, dedication to her students and passion for excellence in medical science is much-admired. She will be greatly missed but no doubt she will still be present within our scientist

community. Her legacy remains in each of the RMIT graduates she has inspired and helped to shape over her years in the industry.

New ANZSBT position statement available: Transporting blood and blood products to a patient's bedside

This recent publication can be downloaded from the [ANZSBT website](#). Its purpose is to assist health organisations and pathology providers comply with the requirements for blood and blood product transportation as set out in the relevant guidelines and standards.

Blood Matters education in 2021

COVID-19 has provided many challenges and difficulties, but it has also provided opportunities to develop and augment new practices. A major positive has been the development of Blood Matters online education events. Not only has the virtual format enhanced accessibility for many people, especially in regional centres, but it has also enabled the merging of cohorts for greater understanding of the different transfusion professional roles.

Save these dates:

- Scientist Summit – 4 August
- Five in 5 education series – 19 – 23 April & 9 – 13 August

There will be other events finalised throughout the year and information will be circulated at the time. These are planned to be virtual and if the situation permits some of these may be converted to face to face events, or a combination of both.

2021 Blood Matters Audit

In 2021, the Blood Matters audit will be an extensive survey of the implementation of an electronic medical record (EMR). We are seeking information on a range of blood related processes of the EMR and will need input from several areas of the health service. We recognise that not all health services have an EMR, there will be questions relevant to all health services. The anticipated date of the audit is **10-31 May 2021**.

Serious transfusion incident reporting system (STIR) Bulletin – new issue

The latest STIR Bulletin includes a case study highlighting the risks and benefits associated with the use of O RhD negative emergency red cell units. It is an important reminder that transfusion of O RhD negative red blood cells are not without risk.

This is available to download from the Blood Matters STIR webpage www.health.vic.gov.au/bloodmatters

STIR Bulletins are prepared regularly to highlight cases of interest and potential practice changes that may affect patient care. Previous STIR Bulletins are also available online:

1. **Parvovirus** – A vignette discussing the transmission of parvovirus via a blood transfusion and the subsequent investigation to identify the source of the illness.
2. **The "untransfusable" patient: what do I do?** - Case scenarios of patients' whose blood groups have created challenges for the pathology service to provide appropriately crossmatched blood.
3. **Allergic reactions** – highlights the management of a suspected anaphylaxis due to blood product transfusion.
4. **Electronic medical records and transfusion** - A discussion on transfusion errors that can be related to an EMR with examples from the field.
5. **Passive transfer of antibodies in patients receiving intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg)** – A discussion of the implications for care of patients who experience a positive serological result related to passive (and significant) antibody transfer.

National certification of the medical scientist profession



A national professional certification scheme for the medical laboratory science profession in Australia has come into effect.

The Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce (ACCMLSW) is a newly created not for profit company established to administer the voluntary certification scheme.

- Join now at www.accmlsw.org.au. You will need to upload:
 - A certificate of primary qualification
 - Continuing professional development (CPD) record – PDF copy of the most recent CPD certificate or an outline of CPD activities in the previous 2 years
 - Declaration of competency assessment and experience (downloadable from the website) signed by your employer.

Why become certified?

- This can be seen as a first step towards ensuring only high calibre practitioners are employed in our laboratories, demanding recognition of our professional standing as part of Australia's health service workforce.
- Certification will be the best benchmark available to assure competent professional practice.
- With a certified workforce there will be more obligation on the employer to ensure staff have professional development opportunities afforded to them.
- As a nationally certified medical scientist you can demonstrate your ongoing commitment to professional development and self-improvement and be recognised as passionate, progressive and pro-active.

[Click here to view a short video about the certification scheme](#)

This scheme needs to be supported for it to succeed. It is the closest we as an industry have got to greater recognition and professionalism with unification of the different professional associations.

Blood Matters is committed to providing support and education to assist in the early stages of this scheme, if you require any assistance or have any questions feel free to contact Rae French at rfrench@redcrossblood.org.au or by phone on 03 9694 3524.

How can Blood Matters help you?

The Blood Matters team is here to assist health services and laboratories through education and providing resources.

We welcome open and collaborative discussion to ensure we can work together to support and enhance your contribution to safe, efficient and effective blood management.

If you have suggestions, comments or ideas on tools and resources that could assist in day to day activities and towards achieving accreditation please let Rae French or any of the Blood Matters team know by email to bloodmatters@redcrossblood.org.au

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