



# Transfusion-Transmitted Infections

## Citation

Bihl, Florian, Damiano Castelli, Francesco Marincola, Roger Y. Dodd, and Christian Brander. 2007. Transfusion-transmitted infections. *Journal of Translational Medicine* 5:25.

## Published Version

doi://10.1186/1479-5876-5-25

## Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:10236033>

## Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

## Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.  
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

Review

Open Access

## Transfusion-transmitted infections

Florian Bihl\*<sup>1</sup>, Damiano Castelli<sup>2</sup>, Francesco Marincola<sup>3</sup>, Roger Y Dodd<sup>4</sup> and Christian Brander<sup>1</sup>

Address: <sup>1</sup>Partners AIDS Research Center, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA, <sup>2</sup>Swiss Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service of Southern Switzerland, Lugano, Switzerland, <sup>3</sup>NIH Clinical Center, HLA Typing Laboratory, Bethesda, MD, USA and <sup>4</sup>American Red Cross, Holland Laboratory, Rockville, MD, USA

Email: Florian Bihl\* - [f.bihl@mac.com](mailto:f.bihl@mac.com); Damiano Castelli - [damiano.castelli@eoc.ch](mailto:damiano.castelli@eoc.ch); Francesco Marincola - [FMarincola@cc.nih.gov](mailto:FMarincola@cc.nih.gov); Roger Y Dodd - [Dodd@usa.redcross.org](mailto:Dodd@usa.redcross.org); Christian Brander - [Cbrander@partners.org](mailto:Cbrander@partners.org)

\* Corresponding author

Published: 6 June 2007

Received: 18 May 2007

*Journal of Translational Medicine* 2007, **5**:25 doi:10.1186/1479-5876-5-25

Accepted: 6 June 2007

This article is available from: <http://www.translational-medicine.com/content/5/1/25>

© 2007 Bihl et al; licensee BioMed Central Ltd.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

### Abstract

Although the risk of transfusion-transmitted infections today is lower than ever, the supply of safe blood products remains subject to contamination with known and yet to be identified human pathogens. Only continuous improvement and implementation of donor selection, sensitive screening tests and effective inactivation procedures can ensure the elimination, or at least reduction, of the risk of acquiring transfusion transmitted infections. In addition, ongoing education and up-to-date information regarding infectious agents that are potentially transmitted via blood components is necessary to promote the reporting of adverse events, an important component of transfusion transmitted disease surveillance. Thus, the collaboration of all parties involved in transfusion medicine, including national haemovigilance systems, is crucial for protecting a secure blood product supply from known and emerging blood-borne pathogens.

### Background

Although there are early reports in the history of medicine that describe attempts to treat patients with human or animal blood products, transfusion medicine is a relatively young field that has developed only since the second half of the last century. Very rapidly, however, it became clear that these therapeutic approaches also carried their problems, such as the (in-)compatibility of red blood cells and plasma between donors and recipients, and the possibility of transmitting infectious diseases [1,2]. While in the past, the risk of transfusion-transmitted infections (TTI) was accepted by patients and physicians as unavoidable, a low-risk blood supply is expected today. Since the early nineteen sixties, blood banks, as well as plasma manufacturing industries, have aggressively pursued strategies to reduce the risks of TTI. In particular, donor exclusion cri-

teria, such as a history of hepatitis or transfusions in the past six months have been in place since early on. Today, donor evaluation, laboratory screening tests and pathogen inactivation procedures are considered crucial tools to reduce the risk of TTI, but do not completely eliminate all risk. At the same time these advances have moved transfusion medicine towards increasingly safer products, at steadily escalating costs and thus leading to major differences in transfusion product safety between wealthy and poor countries.

The current efforts and strategies have greatly helped reduce transfusion-associated risks. Indeed, the risk of being infected by a contaminated blood unit today is orders of magnitude lower when compared to thirty years ago (Table 1). A considerable portion of this improve-

ment is due to the introduction of nucleic acid testing (NAT), rather than relying solely on measuring pathogen-specific humoral immune responses in the donor [3]. In order to maintain the integrity, purity and adequacy of the blood supply new donor screening assays, donor deferral and pathogen inactivation of blood components need to be balanced against the undue loss of potential donors because of overly stringent exclusion criteria. These efforts would ideally be supported by national and international haemovigilance networks that help identify emerging new TTI threats; by facilitating quality assurance, quality control and the ability to monitor all steps in the transfusion chain (Figure 1) [4-6].

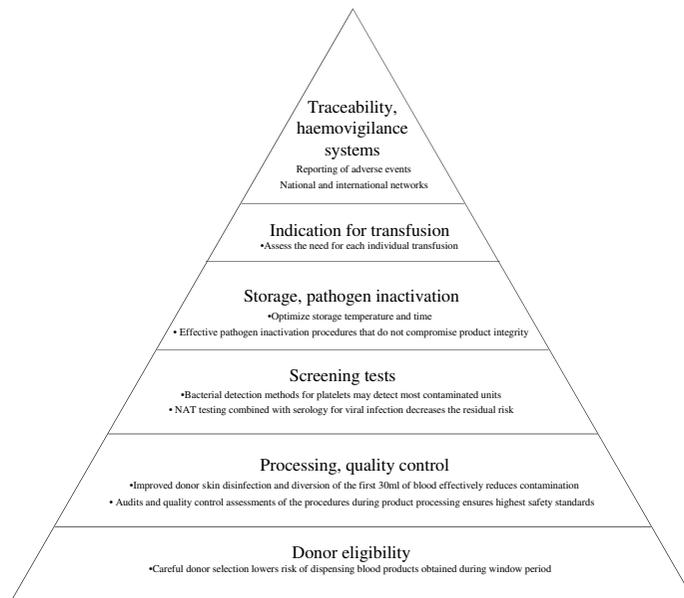
**Bacterial infections**

The risk of bacterial infection has emerged as the major cause of transfusion related morbidity and mortality, in part due to the reduction of other risks [4,7-10]. Bacterial contamination is more frequent in platelet concentrates (PLT) than in red blood components most likely because many microorganisms can survive and propagate under the storage conditions typically used for PLT (20–24 °C), but less so for RBC (1–6 °C) [8-11]

As a consequence of the increasing awareness and clinical relevance of bacterial contamination of blood components, the AABB (formerly The American Association of

Blood Banks) released standards to diminish bacterial TTI [12] in 2004. In particular, bacterial testing of platelets was suggested as an effective measure to improve transfusion safety. Three testing systems are licensed in the U.S. and are in use in many transfusion centers around the world. These screening tests appear quite effective and recent data indicate that the frequency of bacterial contamination has declined by about 50% or more with contamination being detected in about one in 5,000 apheresis PLT concentrates tested[13]. The estimated incidence rates of bacterial TTI with clinical consequences range from one in 70,000 to 118,000 transfused PLT, largely depending on the amount of bacteria transfused and the type of bacterium and its pathogenicity [13,8,14].

In order to design effective strategies to reduce bacterial TTI, the bacterial infections are frequently divided based on the origin of the microorganisms: differentiating infections that originate from the environment, from the skin of the transfused subject, or from those that are likely derived from a donor bacteremia. Most commonly, contamination occurs during blood collection (insufficient disinfection of venipuncture site), or during handling of blood products (leaky seals) [15]. As a result, the most predominant bacteria isolated are usually commensals of the skin or gastrointestinal tract flora. A report from the American Red Cross on detection of bacterial contamina-



**Figure 1**  
Strategies to reduce risk of transfusion transmitted infections.

**Table 1: Relative Risk of the most frequent TTI**

Risk factor/infectious agent	Risk of TTI in blood products released		Ref.
	U.S.	Europe	
<b>Virus</b>			
HIV	I in 2,135,000	I in 909,000 – 5,500,000	26, 30, 33
HCV	I in 1,930,000	I in 2,00,000 – 4,400,000	26, 30, 33
HBV	I in 277,000	I in 72,000 – 1,100,000*	33
WNV	I in 350,000	No reported cases	56, 63
HTLV-II	I in 2,993,000	Not tested	30
<b>Bacteria</b>			
Bacterial contamination	RBC	I in 38,500	8, 10
	Platelets	I in 5,000	13
<b>Parasites</b>			
Malaria	I in 1,000,000 – 5,000,000		105

\* High variations between low-endemic areas and intermediate-endemic areas

tion in platelets showed that the majority of isolates were Gram-positive aerobic pathogens (nearly 75%), in line with the organisms identified in platelet units implicated in cases of transfusion-associated sepsis (56% Gram-positive aerobes) [7].

Measures to reduce the risk of bacterial contamination focus on different steps in the transfusion chain (Figure 1) and can be classified into six aspects:

- 1.) Donor eligibility: To reduce asymptomatic donor bacteremia, subjects with recent dental treatments, minor surgery or increased body temperature at presentation should be excluded from donation.
- 2.) Optimal product processing, handling and storage: Continuous training and supervision of the responsible personnel for donation and product processing are key elements for high quality standards and product safety. Also, consistent storage temperatures (4 °C for RBC and 22–24 °C for PLT) need to be maintained to ensure product integrity.
- 3.) Skin preparation: Improved donor arm disinfection has been shown to be crucial in reducing the numbers of remaining bacteria on the phlebotomy puncture site [16–18].
- 4.) Removal of the initial whole blood collection (diversion): It has been shown that removal of the first 30–40 ml of whole blood from the collection bag might reduce the contamination risk from skin bacteria. In fact, improved donor arm disinfection in association with blood diversion has been reported to reduce the risk of bacterial contamination by up to 77% [19–21].
- 5.) Bacterial detection methods: Different methods have been investigated for detecting bacteria in platelet prod-

ucts prior to transfusion, including an automated bacterial culture method (BacT/ALERT system, bioMérieux), direct bacterial staining, bacterial endotoxin and ribosomal assays, nucleic acids testing for bacterial DNA, and measures of O<sub>2</sub> consumption or CO<sub>2</sub> production (Pall BDS, Pall Corporation) [22–25]. However, none of these detection methods seems to identify all bacterial contaminations and additional bacterial screening tests as well as better timing of bacterial testing (i.e. closer to the time of transfusion) might be needed to further improve the likelihood of correctly identifying bacterially contaminated blood products.

6.) Pathogen reduction methods: Pathogen reduction is a pro-active approach to further reduce the risk of TTI and could prove effective for most known and emerging pathogens. The goal of pathogen inactivation is to reduce transmissible pathogens (bacteria, viruses and protozoa) without compromising therapeutic efficacy of the blood product or introducing secondary risks. These techniques and their current limitations are discussed in more detail below.

### Transfusion-transmitted viral infections

Over the two last decades, much attention has been given to the prevention of transfusion-transmitted viral infections such as HIV-1 and -2, human T cell lymphotropic virus (HTLV) I and II, hepatitis C virus (HCV), hepatitis B virus (HBV) and West Nile Virus (WNV). Given the potential transmission of viruses during the 'immunological window period' [i.e. the period of early infectivity when an immunologic test is non-reactive], novel non-serology based approaches such as viral nucleic acid testing (NAT) have been established. Today NAT is performed on minipools of plasma from 16–24 donations and has significantly increased the sensitivity to detect infected blood components as it reveals viral agents earlier in the 'window period' than antibody or antigen assays[26]. How-

ever, it has some limitations in blood components with very low levels of viremia, which can even escape detection by NAT [27]. Despite this limitation, the combination of both serological testing and NAT has considerably reduced the risk of viral transmission by blood transfusion [28-30].

#### **HIV and HCV**

Surveillance studies in Europe and in the U.S. have documented a significant reduction in the risk of HCV and HIV transmission through blood products over the last three decades [30-32]. In the mid 1980's, anti-HIV serological testing was introduced, followed a few years later by similar approaches for HCV. In 1995, the European plasma fractionating industry introduced viral NAT as a method to further ensure the integrity of virus interdiction and between 1998 and 2001, the new screening methods were widely introduced in many additional countries[31,33]. The implementation of viral NAT testing has greatly helped to reduce the residual risk of viral transmission during the 'window period' by reducing the time for effective detection from 22 days (with solely serological testing) to 11 days for HIV and from 70 to 10 days for HCV [30,34]. As a consequence, the estimated risk for HIV transmission to date is between 0.14 – 1.1 and for HCV between 0.10 – 2.33 per million units transfused[30,35-40].

As shown in a recent study assessing the risks of transfusion-mediated HIV and HCV infections between 1999 and 2003[26], the benefits of NAT testing over antibody testing were confirmed by showing that one out of 230,000 donations tested positive for HCV RNA but not for anti-HCV antibodies. For HIV, with an apparently shorter window period, one out of 3.1 million donations was RNA positive but antibody negative. However, the observed NAT detection rates and its relative benefits can vary widely between sites. For instance, in Europe only 54 anti-HCV antibody negative, HCV RNA positive samples were identified among 58 million donations tested (NAT yield: 0.93 NAT reactive sample per million antibody negative donations) compared to North America (NAT yield: 3.92/million donations) or the Pacific area (NAT yield: 2.37/million donations)[33]. In addition, NAT detection rates may be affected by viral sequence polymorphisms and next generation NAT tests need to be designed to effectively cope with increasing global viral diversity, especially for highly variable pathogens such as HIV and HCV[41].

#### **HBV**

The risk of TT HBV infection has been continuously reduced since the introduction of the hepatitis B surface antigen (HbsAg) testing in the early 1970's, but with more than 300 million individuals infected world wide, HBV

remains a considerable risk for TT infection. HBV surface antigen (HbsAg), the main screening target, is routinely included in the donor screening, but fails to detect the presence of HBV during the 'window period'. A number of countries have also added the testing for antibodies directed against the HBV core protein (anti-Hbc) to the standard screening in an attempt to detect chronic virus carriers with low-level viremia who may not have detectable HBsAg levels. Today, the residual risk of TT HBV infection varies between 0.75 per million blood donations in Australia, 3.6 – 8.5 in the USA and Canada, 0.91 – 8.7 in Northern Europe, 7.5 – 13.9 in Southern Europe up to 200 per million donations in Hong Kong, largely reflecting the global epidemiology of HBV[33]. Even though at present, no regulations for mandatory testing of blood components for HBV NAT exist, a number of countries with low HBV prevalence have implemented HBV NAT testing in plasma pools[33,35,42,43]. However, there is no evidence, so far, that pooled testing with HBV NAT is superior to the most sensitive tests for HBsAg.

The kinetics of viral antigen and antibody appearance during HBV infection create two different window periods in which one or the other test may fail: the "early acute phase", when serological markers are still negative and the "late chronic phase" when HBsAg may become gradually undetectable, although infectivity remains [44,45]. Thus, the effective immunological window period could be longer than what is generally considered (median of 59 days)[45-47]. NAT could potentially identify some of these cases and may also be of particular benefit in the detection of HBV DNA in "occult HBV infection", where HBV DNA is present in the plasma in the absence of detectable HBsAg and variable presence of anti-HBc and/or anti-HBs antibodies [48,49]. In addition, in some cases, infection by HBV mutants that affect the surface antigen conformation may result in failure to detect HBV infection by routine diagnostic assays [50-52]. Even though HBV NAT could detect these cases, higher levels of sensitivity for NAT may be necessary to cope with the characteristically low level viremia (< 500 IU/ml) seen in occult HBV infection [53-56].

#### **West Nile Virus**

West Nile virus (WNV), a mosquito-borne RNA virus of the flavivirus family, is an emerging TT agent with potential future importance for the North American continent. WNV was first isolated in samples obtained in 1937 from patients in Uganda where the virus is endemic and more recently appeared in New York City in 1999. A total of 4,200 cases of WNV infections were reported to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2002, and by 2003 the number had risen to 9,858 cases including 262 deaths (a 2.66% reported mortality rate). In 2004 and 2005, the reported cases declined (2,282 and 2,949 cases

with 77 and 116 fatalities, respectively) [57]. While most (80%) WNV infections occur asymptotically or with only mild flu-like symptoms without sequelae, in 0.6% of infections, neuro-invasive disease culminating in fatal meningitis or encephalitis can occur, especially in immune-compromised and elderly subjects[58]. In 2002, 23 cases of transfusion- and four cases of organ-transmitted WNV infection were reported and WNV-specific NAT testing was implemented as routine screening in the USA in 2003 [59-62]. Of 27.2 million donations screened, 1,039 viremic donations were identified, with many samples showing low-level viremia [63]. Therefore, WNV NAT is usually performed at the single-donation level in locations and periods with high incidence of infection[64,65]. No TT WNV case has been described so far in Europe, nor did any blood donation test positive for WNV RNA among 62,000 tested samples in the Netherlands[66]. In fact, WNV prevalence is quite infrequent in Europe, probably as a result of viral strain differences, herd immunity, and a relative absence of mosquitoes that can transmit the virus to humans.

Aside from HIV, HCV, HBV and WNV, a number of other viral infections transmitted by transfusion of blood products have been described, even though not all have been associated with clinical manifestation. Human T cell lymphotropic viruses I and II (HTLV-I/II) are associated with adult T cell leukemia and HTLV-associated myelopathy/tropical spastic paraparesis[67]. Both retroviruses have also been attributed a role in the increased risk for developing severe asthma, respiratory and urinary tract infections, uveitis and dermatitis [68-71]. The global epidemiology of HTLV varies widely with prevalence rates up to 10% in certain areas in Japan, and up to 5-6 % in countries of the Caribbean, the Sub-Saharan Africa, and areas in the Middle East and South America[71]. Transfusion-associated transmission of HTLV-I/II occurs through cellular components only and infectivity declines with component storage, particularly after 10 days [72]. The risk of HTLV transmission in the U.S. is very low (1 in 3 million) and cases of HTLV-related disease after transfusion transmission are rare[30].

The transfusion-associated transmission of human herpes viruses, including cytomegalovirus (CMV) and human herpesvirus 8 [HHV-8, also known as Kaposi's Sarcoma-associated herpesvirus] have been described and can pose significant threats, especially to immunocompromised subjects. Like all human herpes viruses, both are cell-associated pathogens and cellular components are thus the main compartment for their transmission by transfused blood products. Recommendations for the control of CMV transmission to susceptible groups have been established and patients at increased risk of CMV disease should only receive CMV-seronegative and/or leucore-

duced products, the latter of which has been shown to reduce the risk of CMV transmission considerably [73-76]

HHV8, a human gamma-herpesvirus is the causative agent of Kaposi's Sarcoma, and the probable cause of multicentric Castleman's disease and primary effusion lymphoma[77]. Although normally transmitted through saliva or sexual contact, there is evidence now that HHV-8 can be transmitted via blood transfusion or solid organ transplantation [78-80]. Despite this evidence of successful blood-borne transmission of HHV-8, no data exist yet that link TT HHV-8 transmission to HHV-8-associated diseases in immunocompetent subjects[81,82].

Parvovirus B19 (PV-B19) is a non-enveloped erythrovirus which infects hematopoietic cells. In healthy individuals, PV-B19 infection via the respiratory route leads to erythema infectiosum (Fifth disease), usually a mild and self-limited childhood disease that manifest itself in adults with fever, rash, myalgia, and arthropathy. Pregnant women can transmit the infection intra-uterine with subsequent fetal heart failure and hydrops fetalis. Transfusion transmissions of PV-B19 with mild and non-life-threatening symptoms, even in immuno-compromised patients, have been reported in several studies and epidemiologic analyses have found B19 to be a recurring contaminant of blood products [83-85]. Since the virus lacks an envelope, it is resistant to most virus inactivation methods (solvent/detergent method, heat inactivation or methylene blue)[83,84,86]. In Europe, plasma pools used for production of anti-D immunoglobulin must not exceed 10<sup>4</sup> IU of B19 per milliliter and novel, PCR-based detection and quantification kits have been developed to this end in the last few years [87].

Two viruses generally associated with fecal-oral transmission, hepatitis A virus (HAV) and E virus (HEV), have been shown to be at least occasionally transmissible via blood transfusion. Both pathogens are non-enveloped RNA viruses with a low prevalence in developed countries that have advanced environmental hygiene; a vaccine is available for HAV. However, only a few HAV and HEV transfusion-transmissions have been reported, with only mild liver disease as a result [88-91].

There are some other viral agents such as HGV (hepatitis G virus, also known as GB virus type C), TT-virus and SEN virus that have been shown to be transmissible by blood products[92,93]. In a study conducted in Germany in 2004, 1.6% of 25,000 donations screened were found to be HGV RNA positive[94]. Similarly, the prevalence of TTV among healthy blood donors is widespread, especially in Asia (14-36%) [95,96] while the prevalence of SEN-V in healthy individuals ranges from 1.8% (USA) up to 22% in Japan[97]. However, no report exists that links

the transfusion-associated transmission of any of these viruses with clinical symptoms and no procedures to protect the blood supply from these pathogens have been implemented.

Aside from the above viral pathogens for which TT related infections have been more or less well documented, there are a number of other potential TT viral threats for which comparable information is missing. Among these, the coronavirus of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV) or the H5N1 influenza A virus (avian flu) both seem to have primarily respiratory modes of transmission, but evidence of viremia suggests caution and blood-borne transmission has yet to be conclusively ruled out. Especially for SARS-CoV, concerns about potential risk for transfusion transmission led to global implementation of temporary precautionary measures [98]. For relative risk evaluation it will be useful to consider the length of asymptomatic viremic stages in the infected individual, as viruses with only very short viremic episodes along with low levels of viremia may represent relatively moderate risks for TTI, as is the case for WNV.

### Parasites

Parasites are common infectious agents worldwide, and several protozoans have been shown to be transmitted via blood transfusion[99]. Malaria is endemic in tropical and sub-tropical regions of Africa with up to 300 million infections and one million deaths annually[100]. It is caused by one of the four species of *Plasmodium*, (*falciparum*, *vivax*, *malariae* and *oval*) which are mosquito-borne intraerythrocytic parasites that infect liver and red blood cells (RBC) causing periodic episodes of fever and flu-like symptoms, along with massive lysis of erythrocytes. The risk of TT malaria differs widely between low-endemic countries, where the infection is "imported" from outside (e.g. travel to or immigration of individuals from highly endemic regions) and regions of high prevalence of plasmodium infection in the general population. For the latter, only limited data are available, with one report from Benin showing one third of the screened blood donors to harbor *Plasmodium falciparum* trophozoites and potentially be able to transmit the pathogen by blood products[101]. The risk in low-endemic areas is introduced from either travelers to, or immigrants from, high endemic areas[99,102-104]; the latter are usually individuals with a protective immune status who, after many years of infection, can still harbor parasites. Nevertheless, the risk of transfusion-transmitted malaria in low-endemic areas like Europe and the U.S. is low, with only one in 3-4 million units transfused being potentially infectious[105,106]. In some European countries, as well as the U.S., current strategies to prevent TT malaria are based on risk group assessment and include donor deferral for 4-12 months for visitors from low-endemic areas

to high-endemic countries, and 3-5 years [or permanently] for donors with a history of residency in an endemic area[105,107,108]. However, this deferral policy leads to an extensive, and for some countries unaffordable, loss of blood donations; this reason is why combined travel-based risk assessment and serological screening tests (enzyme immunoassays, EIA or immunofluorescent antibody test, IFAT) have been introduced in a number of countries [107,109-111].

*Trypanosoma cruzi*, the etiologic agent of Chagas disease (CD), is endemic in Central and South America and parts of Mexico and acute infection can be accompanied with acute symptoms like fever, lymphadenomegaly or hepato- and splenomegaly. After 10-40 years, 20-30% of infected patients present with serious organ enlargements (cardiomegaly and occasionally mega-esophagus). Individuals from endemic areas may be chronic carriers of the parasite and are potentially at risk of transmitting the parasite via transfusion of their blood. Although a study performed in the U.S. found a noticeable seroprevalence rate of 0.12-0.20% among such risk donors, blood-borne *T. cruzi* infections are infrequent in North America, with only 7 reported cases. Transfusion cases are well-known in Mexico, Central and South America[112,113]. In many of these countries, serological testing is performed and positive donors are deferred[114]; With the recent licensure of a blood donor screening test, such testing will shortly start in the US.

Other parasites that have been implicated in transfusion-associated transmission are tick-borne pathogens, of which *Babesia microti*, the etiologic agent of babesiosis, is the most frequent transfusion-transmitted parasite. *Babesia microti* is transmitted by *Ixodes* ticks and can lead to severe complications including hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia and death, especially when transmitted to an immunocompromised or asplenic subject. There are only few studies regarding transfusion-transmitted babesiosis, including some reporting fatal disease outcome[113], but more than 60 cases are known in the US. Since babesia is an intra-erythrocytic microbe, leucoreduction is an ineffective approach to reduce transmission risk and, given the absence of appropriate serological assays, poses a blood safety risk. *Leishmania donovani*, transmitted primarily by the bite of infected sand flies has also been shown to be transmitted by blood and cause clinical disease in newborns and immunosuppressed subjects. However, these cases appear to be restricted to highly endemic areas such as the Middle East and do not pose significant risks in other parts of the world [115]. Nevertheless, individuals returning to the U.S. from combat zones in Iraq are currently deferred for one year. Aside from parasites, other tick-borne agents such as the two bacteria *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* and *Rickettsia rickettsii* have been rarely

found in blood products although most TT tick-borne infections have been largely confined to the Northeastern U.S. and one case of TT babesia infection in Japan [116,117].

### Human prion disease

Variant CJD (vCJD) is the human form of the bovine spongiform encephalitis [BSE]. However, unlike classic Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease (CJD), variant CJD (vCJD) primarily affects people under 50 years of age and is likely to have been transmitted by consuming tissues from BSE-infected animals. Although initially not considered blood-borne, prion diseases have been shown in animal models to be transmissible by blood products [118]. While evidence for blood-borne transmission of classic CJD is still lacking, three cases of transfusion-transmitted vCJD have been reported in the UK [119-122]. In all three reports, the blood donors developed clinical-apparent vCJD after blood donation. Two of the recipients showed signs of clinical disease whereas the third patient was asymptomatic, but had detectable prions at the time of death (from an unrelated cause). Notably, all three infected patients received non-leucodepleted red blood cells despite the fact that, to date, no TT vCJD case has been associated with the use of plasma products. One important factor to estimate the risk that TT prion diseases may pose in the future is the potentially prolonged pre-clinical carrier state which can last for decades and thus represents a significant risk for transfusion-medicine, at least in regions such as England, Ireland and France where many cases of vCJD have been reported [123]. As a countermeasure, France and the U.K. have adopted the practice to decline individuals who have received a transfusion of any blood component since 1980 indefinitely. Similarly in the U.S. donors with a history of extended residence in the U.K. or Europe, or a history of transfusion in the U.K., are permanently refused.

### Pathogen inactivation

The concept of pathogen inactivation in blood components is to reduce the residual risk of known pathogens and to effectively eliminate new, yet unknown pathogens. However, the different approaches should increase the blood safety without compromising the product efficacy or causing adverse effects, as toxic or mutagenic chemicals may be used in the process. While a number of pathogen reduction methods are employed in Europe, none of them are currently available in the U.S. The choice of a pathogen reduction approach depends on whether it is used to treat components for transfusion such as RBC, PLT and plasma, or for products manufactured from the plasma. In Europe, two distinct methods, methylene blue (MB) and solvent-detergent (SD) are currently employed for the treatment of plasma intended for transfusion. MB is a phenothiazine colorant that inactivates most viruses and

bacteria after exposure to visible light. While it has the advantage of being useful for single plasma units, its ineffectiveness against intracellular pathogens and probable interaction with coagulation factors considerably reduce its efficacy[124]. The SD approach acts by disrupting the envelope proteins of targeted pathogens, thus compromising the integrity of the pathogen and rendering it non-infectious. This approach is used on small pools of plasma. The limitation of this technique is that it is not active against non-enveloped pathogens, and that levels of coagulation factors such as protein S may be decreased significantly by some of the SD treatment methods [125,126].

Amotosalen HCL (S-59) is a synthetic psoralen which, when combined with exposure to ultraviolet A [UVA] light, causes a permanent crosslink in bacterial and viral nucleic acid chains, thereby stopping pathogen replication[127]. The photochemical treatment (PCT) with amotosalen and UVA light can be used for FFP and platelets. A commercial product based on this approach is the INTERCEPT system, which has been introduced into clinical practice in Europe a few years ago and has completed phase III trials in the USA [28]. Extensive studies have shown that this approach is effective against all pathogens that are currently screened for, including enveloped and non-enveloped viruses, bacteria (Gram-positive and -negative) and protozoans (*T. cruzi* and *Plasmodium falciparum*) [128-131]. However, a large controlled study has indicated that PCT may have negative effects on the functionality of platelets as transfusions using treated platelet preparations had to be repeated in shorter intervals than when using untreated platelet preparations [132]. Aside from these approaches to pathogen reduction in platelet preparations, at least three techniques for pathogen inactivation in RBC are currently under development: S-303, a synthetic alkylating agent, (a compound of the frangible anchor-linked effectors [FRALE] class) capable of disrupting pathogen RNA or DNA[133]; Inactine, a binary ethyleneimine that binds to nucleic acids resulting in the inhibition of pathogen replication [134-137]; and riboflavin [vitamin B<sub>2</sub>], a naturally occurring nutrient [138-143]. Even though some of these agents have entered phase III clinical trials none of them have been officially approved at the time this review was written. These approaches, as well as newly developed ones, will need to show convincingly that they successfully eliminate targeted pathogens while maintaining blood product quality. In addition, possible limitations, such as high costs, long-term side effects of some additives and inability to inactivate certain pathogens like spore-forming bacteria will need to be overcome to ensure pathogen-free blood products on a large scale and at affordable prices.

## Conclusion

The general public may be idealistic in their belief that risk-free blood products are achievable in today's world. In fact, the threat of infectious agents entering the blood supply is not static and may evolve as new pathogens emerge or as old ones change their epidemiological pattern. Nevertheless, the goal of a safe and affordable blood supply that can meet the growing global demands may be reached by the coordinated optimization of each step in the transfusion chain, including the careful consideration of donor eligibility criteria, adherence to rigorous rules during donation, processing and storage, the optimal implementation of available screening tests, the use of suitable pathogen inactivation methods and finally the vigilance of prudent physicians, who evaluate the necessity of each transfusion. Efforts invested in providing lowest possible risk blood products need to be matched by the diligence of physicians administering the transfusions who need to report adverse consequences of blood transfusions. Hence, national haemovigilance systems linked to an international network are becoming indispensable elements of blood product safety and quality. Combined with the development and implementation of sensitive and affordable detection and inactivation approaches, these measures can make blood transfusion a safer form of therapy even in places where the risks to date have to be considered significant [5,6,144,145].

## Conflict of interest

The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests.

## References

- Pittman M: **A study of bacteria implicated in transfusion reactions and of bacteria isolated from blood products.** *J Lab Clin Med* 1953, **42(2)**:273-288.
- McEntegart MG: **Dangerous contaminants in stored blood.** *Lancet* 1956, **271(6949)**:909-911.
- Snyder EL, Dodd RY: **Reducing the risk of blood transfusion.** *Hematology (Am Soc Hematol Educ Program)* 2001:433-442.
- Andreu G, Morel P, Forestier F, Debeir J, Rebibo D, Janvier G, Herve P: **Hemovigilance network in France: organization and analysis of immediate transfusion incident reports from 1994 to 1998.** *Transfusion* 2002, **42(10)**:1356-1364.
- Faber JC: **Haemovigilance procedure in transfusion medicine.** *Hematol J* 2004, **5 Suppl 3**:S74-82.
- Faber JC: **Worldwide overview of existing haemovigilance systems.** *Transfus Apher Sci* 2004, **31(2)**:99-110.
- Wagner SJ: **Transfusion-transmitted bacterial infection: risks, sources and interventions.** *Vox Sang* 2004, **86(3)**:157-163.
- Hillyer CD, Josephson CD, Blajchman MA, Vostal JG, Epstein JS, Goodman JL: **Bacterial contamination of blood components: risks, strategies, and regulation: joint ASH and AABB educational session in transfusion medicine.** *Hematology (Am Soc Hematol Educ Program)* 2003:575-589.
- CDC: **Fatal Bacterial Infections Associated with Platelet Transfusion-United States, 2004.** *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2005, **54(7)**:168-170.
- Brecher ME, Hay SN: **Bacterial contamination of blood components.** *Clin Microbiol Rev* 2005, **18(1)**:195-204.
- Blajchman MA, Goldman M, Baeza F: **Improving the bacteriological safety of platelet transfusions.** *Transfus Med Rev* 2004, **18(1)**:11-24.
- American Association of Blood Banks: **Guidance on implementation of new bacteria reduction and detection standards.** *AABB Bulletin* 2004, **04(07)**:-.
- Fang CT, Chambers LA, Kennedy J, Strupp A, Fucci MC, Janas JA, Tang Y, Hapip CA, Lawrence TB, Dodd RY: **Detection of bacterial contamination in apheresis platelet products: American Red Cross experience, 2004.** *Transfusion* 2005, **45(12)**:1845-1852.
- Niu MT, Knippen M, Simmons L, Holness LG: **Transfusion-transmitted Klebsiella pneumoniae fatalities, 1995 to 2004.** *Transfus Med Rev* 2006, **20(2)**:149-157.
- Hogman CF, Engstrand L: **Serious bacterial complications from blood components--how do they occur?** *Transfus Med* 1998, **8(1)**:1-3.
- Goldman M, Roy G, Frechette N, Decary F, Massicotte L, Delage G: **Evaluation of donor skin disinfection methods.** *Transfusion* 1997, **37(3)**:309-312.
- McDonald CP, Lowe P, Roy A, Robbins S, Hartley S, Harrison JF, Slopecki A, Verlander N, Barbara JA: **Evaluation of donor arm disinfection techniques.** *Vox Sang* 2001, **80(3)**:135-141.
- Lee CK, Ho PL, Chan NK, Mak A, Hong J, Lin CK: **Impact of donor arm skin disinfection on the bacterial contamination rate of platelet concentrates.** *Vox Sang* 2002, **83(3)**:204-208.
- Wagner SJ, Robinette D, Friedman LI, Miripol J: **Diversion of initial blood flow to prevent whole-blood contamination by skin surface bacteria: an in vitro model.** *Transfusion* 2000, **40(3)**:335-338.
- de Korte D, Marcelis JH, Verhoeven AJ, Soeterboek AM: **Diversion of first blood volume results in a reduction of bacterial contamination for whole-blood collections.** *Vox Sang* 2002, **83(1)**:13-16.
- Chassaigne M, Vassort-Bruneau C, Allouch P, Audurier A, Boulard G, Grosdhomme F, Noel L, Gulian C, Janus G, Perez P: **Reduction of bacterial load by predonation sampling.** *Transfus Apher Sci* 2001, **24(3)**:253.
- Brecher ME, Hay SN, Rose AD, Rothenberg SJ: **Evaluation of BacT/ALERT plastic culture bottles for use in testing pooled whole blood-derived leukoreduced platelet-rich plasma platelets with a single contaminated unit.** *Transfusion* 2005, **45(9)**:1512-1517.
- Brecher ME, Hay SN, Rothenberg SJ: **Validation of BacT/ALERT plastic culture bottles for use in testing of whole-blood-derived leukoreduced platelet-rich-plasma-derived platelets.** *Transfusion* 2004, **44(8)**:1174-1178.
- McDonald CP, Roy A, Lowe P, Robbins S, Hartley S, Barbara JA: **Evaluation of the BacT/Alert automated blood culture system for detecting bacteria and measuring their growth kinetics in leucodepleted and non-leucodepleted platelet concentrates.** *Vox Sang* 2001, **81(3)**:154-160.
- Ortolano GA, Freundlich LF, Holme S, Russell RL, Cortus MA, Wilkins K, Nomura H, Chong C, Carmen R, Capetandes A, Wenz B: **Detection of bacteria in WBC-reduced PLT concentrates using percent oxygen as a marker for bacteria growth.** *Transfusion* 2003, **43(9)**:1276-1285.
- Stramer SL, Glynn SA, Kleinman SH, Strong DM, Caglioti S, Wright DJ, Dodd RY, Busch MP: **Detection of HIV-1 and HCV infections among antibody-negative blood donors by nucleic acid-amplification testing.** *N Engl J Med* 2004, **351(8)**:760-768.
- Schuttler CG, Caspari G, Jursch CA, Willems WR, Gerlich WH, Schaefer S: **Hepatitis C virus transmission by a blood donation negative in nucleic acid amplification tests for viral RNA.** *Lancet* 2000, **355(9197)**:41-42.
- Allain JP, Bianco C, Blajchman MA, Brecher ME, Busch M, Leib D, Lin L, Stramer S: **Protecting the blood supply from emerging pathogens: the role of pathogen inactivation.** *Transfus Med Rev* 2005, **19(2)**:110-126.
- Kleinman S, Chan P, Robillard P: **Risks associated with transfusion of cellular blood components in Canada.** *Transfus Med Rev* 2003, **17(2)**:120-162.
- Dodd RY, Notari EP, Stramer SL: **Current prevalence and incidence of infectious disease markers and estimated window-period risk in the American Red Cross blood donor population.** *Transfusion* 2002, **42(8)**:975-979.
- Busch MP, Kleinman SH, Nemo GJ: **Current and emerging infectious risks of blood transfusions.** *Jama* 2003, **289(8)**:959-962.
- Laperche S: **Blood safety and nucleic acid testing in Europe.** *Euro Surveill* 2005, **10(2)**:3-4.

33. Coste J, Reesink HW, Engelfriet CP, Laperche S, Brown S, Busch MP, Cuijpers HT, Elgin R, Ekermo B, Epstein JS, Flesland O, Heier HE, Henn G, Hernandez JM, Hewlett IK, Hyland C, Keller AJ, Krusius T, Levicnik-Stezina S, Levy G, Lin CK, Margaritis AR, Muylle L, Niederhauser C, Pastila S, Pillonel J, Pineau J, van der Poel CL, Politis C, Roth WK, Sauleda S, Seed CR, Sondag-Thull D, Stramer SL, Strong M, Vamvakas EC, Velati C, Vesga MA, Zanetti A: **Implementation of donor screening for infectious agents transmitted by blood by nucleic acid technology: update to 2003.** *Vox Sang* 2005, **88(4)**:289-303.
34. Busch GM: **Closing the window on viral transmission by blood transfusion.** In *Blood Safety in the new millennium* Edited by: SL S. Bethesda, MD, American Association of Blood Banks; 2001:33-54.
35. Offergeld R, Faensen D, Ritter S, Hamouda O: **Human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis C and hepatitis B infections among blood donors in Germany 2000-2002: risk of virus transmission and the impact of nucleic acid amplification testing.** *Euro Surveill* 2005, **10(2)**:8-11.
36. Niederhauser C, Schneider P, Fopp M, Ruefer A, Levy G: **Incidence of viral markers and evaluation of the estimated risk in the Swiss blood donor population from 1996 to 2003.** *Euro Surveill* 2005, **10(2)**:14-16.
37. Velati C, Fomiatti L, Baruffi L, Romano L, Zanetti A: **Impact of nucleic acid amplification technology (NAT) in Italy in the three years following implementation (2001-2003).** *Euro Surveill* 2005, **10(2)**:12-14.
38. Soldan K, Davison K, Dow B: **Estimates of the frequency of HBV, HCV, and HIV infectious donations entering the blood supply in the United Kingdom, 1996 to 2003.** *Euro Surveill* 2005, **10(2)**:17-19.
39. Pillonel J, Laperche S: **Trends in risk of transfusion-transmitted viral infections (HIV, HCV, HBV) in France between 1992 and 2003 and impact of nucleic acid testing (NAT).** *Euro Surveill* 2005, **10(2)**:5-8.
40. Alvarez do Barrio M, Gonzalez Diez R, Hernandez Sanchez JM, Oyonarte Gomez S: **Residual risk of transfusion-transmitted viral infections in Spain, 1997-2002, and impact of nucleic acid testing.** *Euro Surveill* 2005, **10(2)**:20-22.
41. Delwart E, Kuhns MC, Busch MP: **Surveillance of the genetic variation in incident HIV, HCV, and HBV infections in blood and plasma donors: Implications for blood safety, diagnostics, treatment, and molecular epidemiology.** *J Med Virol* 2006, **78 Suppl 1**:S30-5.
42. Yugi H, Hino S, Satake M, Tadodoro K: **Implementation of donor screening for infectious agents transmitted by blood by nucleic acid technology in Japan.** *Vox Sang* 2005, **89(4)**:265.
43. Brojer E: **Implementation of donor screening for infectious agents transmitted by blood by nucleic acid technology in Poland.** *Vox Sang* 2005, **89(4)**:267-268.
44. Weber B: **Genetic variability of the S gene of hepatitis B virus: clinical and diagnostic impact.** *J Clin Virol* 2005, **32(2)**:102-112.
45. Yoshikawa A, Gotanda Y, Itabashi M, Minegishi K, Kanemitsu K, Nishioka K: **HBV NAT positive [corrected] blood donors in the early and late stages of HBV infection: analyses of the window period and kinetics of HBV DNA.** *Vox Sang* 2005, **88(2)**:77-86.
46. Soldan K, Barbara JA, Ramsay ME, Hall AJ: **Estimation of the risk of hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and human immunodeficiency virus infectious donations entering the blood supply in England, 1993-2001.** *Vox Sang* 2003, **84(4)**:274-286.
47. Biswas R, Tabor E, Hsia CC, Wright DJ, Laycock ME, Fiebig EW, Pedada L, Smith R, Schreiber GB, Epstein JS, Nemo GJ, Busch MP: **Comparative sensitivity of HBV NATs and HBsAg assays for detection of acute HBV infection.** *Transfusion* 2003, **43(6)**:788-798.
48. Sanchez-Quijano A, Jauregui JI, Leal M, Pineda JA, Castilla A, Abad MA, Civeira MP, Garcia de Pesquera F, Prieto J, Lissen E: **Hepatitis B virus occult infection in subjects with persistent isolated anti-HBc reactivity.** *J Hepatol* 1993, **17(3)**:288-293.
49. Cacciola I, Pollicino T, Squadrino G, Cerenzia G, Villari D, de Franchis R, Santantonio T, Brancatelli S, Colucci G, Raimondo G: **Quantification of intrahepatic hepatitis B virus (HBV) DNA in patients with chronic HBV infection.** *Hepatology* 2000, **31(2)**:507-512.
50. Coleman PF: **Detecting hepatitis B surface antigen mutants.** *Emerg Infect Dis* 2006, **12(2)**:198-203.
51. Weber B: **Diagnostic impact of the genetic variability of the hepatitis B virus surface antigen gene.** *J Med Virol* 2006, **78 Suppl 1**:S59-65.
52. Tabor E: **Infections by hepatitis B surface antigen gene mutants in Europe and North America.** *J Med Virol* 2006, **78 Suppl 1**:S43-7.
53. Liu CJ, Lo SC, Kao JH, Tseng PT, Lai MY, Ni YH, Yeh SH, Chen PJ, Chen DS: **Transmission of occult hepatitis B virus by transfusion to adult and pediatric recipients in Taiwan.** *J Hepatol* 2006, **44(1)**:39-46.
54. Prati D, Gerosa A, Porretti L: **Occult HBV infection and blood transfusion.** *J Hepatol* 2006, **44(4)**:818.
55. Jongerius JM, Wester M, Cuyper HT, van Oostendorp WR, Lelie PN, van der Poel CL, van Leeuwen EF: **New hepatitis B virus mutant form in a blood donor that is undetectable in several hepatitis B surface antigen screening assays.** *Transfusion* 1998, **38(1)**:56-59.
56. Levicnik-Stezinar S: **Hepatitis B surface antigen escape mutant in a first time blood donor potentially missed by a routine screening assay.** *Clin Lab* 2004, **50(1-2)**:49-51.
57. CDC: **West Nile Virus, Statistics, Surveillance, and Control.** [<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>]. Accessed:4/25/2006
58. Gould LH, Fikrig E: **West Nile virus: a growing concern?** *J Clin Invest* 2004, **113(8)**:1102-1107.
59. Pealer LN, Marfin AA, Petersen LR, Lanciotti RS, Page PL, Stramer SL, Stobierski MG, Signs K, Newman B, Kapoor H, Goodman JL, Chamberland ME: **Transmission of West Nile virus through blood transfusion in the United States in 2002.** *N Engl J Med* 2003, **349(13)**:1236-1245.
60. CDC: **Update: Investigations of West Nile virus infections in recipients of organ transplantation and blood transfusion.** *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2002, **51(37)**:833-836.
61. Busch MP, Caglioti S, Robertson EF, McAuley JD, Tobler LH, Kamel H, Linnen JM, Shyamala V, Tomasulo P, Kleinman SH: **Screening the blood supply for West Nile virus RNA by nucleic acid amplification testing.** *N Engl J Med* 2005, **353(5)**:460-467.
62. Stramer SL, Fang CT, Foster GA, Wagner AG, Brodsky JP, Dodd RY: **West Nile virus among blood donors in the United States, 2003 and 2004.** *N Engl J Med* 2005, **353(5)**:451-459.
63. Petersen LR, Epstein JS: **Problem solved? West Nile virus and transfusion safety.** *N Engl J Med* 2005, **353(5)**:516-517.
64. Custer B, Busch MP, Marfin AA, Petersen LR: **The cost-effectiveness of screening the U.S. blood supply for West Nile virus.** *Ann Intern Med* 2005, **143(7)**:486-492.
65. Korves CT, Goldie SJ, Murray MB: **Cost-effectiveness of alternative blood-screening strategies for West Nile Virus in the United States.** *PLoS Med* 2006, **3(2)**:e21.
66. Koppelman MH, Sjerps MS, de Waal M, Reesink HW, Cuyper HT: **No evidence of West Nile virus infection in Dutch blood donors.** *Vox Sang* 2006, **90(3)**:166-169.
67. Manns A, Hisada M, La Grenade L: **Human T-lymphotropic virus type I infection.** *Lancet* 1999, **353(9168)**:1951-1958.
68. Murphy EL, Glynn SA, Friley J, Sacher RA, Smith JW, Wright DJ, Newman B, Gibble JW, Ameti DI, Nass CC, Schreiber GB, Nemo GJ: **Increased prevalence of infectious diseases and other adverse outcomes in human T lymphotropic virus types I- and II-infected blood donors. Retrovirus Epidemiology Donor Study (REDS) Study Group.** *J Infect Dis* 1997, **176(6)**:1468-1475.
69. Murphy EL, Wang B, Sacher RA, Friley J, Smith JW, Nass CC, Newman B, Ownby HE, Garratty G, Hutching ST, Schreiber GB: **Respiratory and urinary tract infections, arthritis, and asthma associated with HTLV-I and HTLV-II infection.** *Emerg Infect Dis* 2004, **10(1)**:109-116.
70. Roucoux DF, Murphy EL: **The epidemiology and disease outcomes of human T-lymphotropic virus type II.** *AIDS Rev* 2004, **6(3)**:144-154.
71. Proietti FA, Carneiro-Proietti AB, Catalan-Soares BC, Murphy EL: **Global epidemiology of HTLV-I infection and associated diseases.** *Oncogene* 2005, **24(39)**:6058-6068.
72. Stramer SL, Foster GA, Dodd RY: **Effectiveness of human T-lymphotropic virus (HTLV) recipient tracing (lookback) and the current HTLV-I and -II confirmatory algorithm, 1999 to 2004.** *Transfusion* 2006, **46(5)**:703-707.

73. Vamvakas EC: **Is white blood cell reduction equivalent to antibody screening in preventing transmission of cytomegalovirus by transfusion? A review of the literature and meta-analysis.** *Transfus Med Rev* 2005, **19(3)**:181-199.
74. Blajchman MA: **The clinical benefits of the leukoreduction of blood products.** *J Trauma* 2006, **60(6 Suppl)**:S83-90.
75. Visconti MR, Pennington J, Garner SF, Allain JP, Williamson LM: **Assessment of removal of human cytomegalovirus from blood components by leukocyte depletion filters using real-time quantitative PCR.** *Blood* 2004, **103(3)**:1137-1139.
76. Blajchman MA, Goldman M, Freedman JJ, Sher GD: **Proceedings of a consensus conference: prevention of post-transfusion CMV in the era of universal leukoreduction.** *Transfus Med Rev* 2001, **15(1)**:1-20.
77. Knowles DM, Cesarman E: **The Kaposi's sarcoma-associated herpesvirus (human herpesvirus-8) in Kaposi's sarcoma, malignant lymphoma, and other diseases.** *Ann Oncol* 1997, **8 Suppl 2**:123-129.
78. Hladik W, Dollard SC, Mermin J, Fowlkes AL, Downing R, Amin MM, Banage F, Nzoro E, Kataaha P, Dondero TJ, Pellett PE, Lackritz EM: **Transmission of human herpesvirus 8 by blood transfusion.** *N Engl J Med* 2006, **355(13)**:1331-1338.
79. Dollard SC, Nelson KE, Ness PM, Stambolis V, Kuehnert MJ, Pellett PE, Cannon MJ: **Possible transmission of human herpesvirus-8 by blood transfusion in a historical United States cohort.** *Transfusion* 2005, **45(4)**:500-503.
80. Regamey N, Tamm M, Wernli M, Witschi A, Thiel G, Cathomas G, Erb P: **Transmission of human herpesvirus 8 infection from renal-transplant donors to recipients.** *N Engl J Med* 1998, **339(19)**:1358-1363.
81. Dodd RY: **Human herpesvirus-8: what (not) to do?** *Transfusion* 2005, **45(4)**:463-465.
82. Blajchman MA, Vamvakas EC: **The continuing risk of transfusion-transmitted infections.** *N Engl J Med* 2006, **355(13)**:1303-1305.
83. Wu CG, Mason B, Jong J, Erdman D, McKernan L, Oakley M, Soucie M, Evatt B, Yu MY: **Parvovirus B19 transmission by a high-purity factor VIII concentrate.** *Transfusion* 2005, **45(6)**:1003-1010.
84. Koenigbauer UF, Eastlund T, Day JW: **Clinical illness due to parvovirus B19 infection after infusion of solvent/detergent-treated pooled plasma.** *Transfusion* 2000, **40(10)**:1203-1206.
85. Plentz A, Hahn J, Knoll A, Holler E, Jilg W, Modrow S: **Exposure of hematologic patients to parvovirus B19 as a contaminant of blood cell preparations and blood products.** *Transfusion* 2005, **45(11)**:1811-1815.
86. Blumel J, Schmidt I, Effenberger W, Seitz H, Willkommen H, Brackmann HH, Lower J, Eis-Hubinger AM: **Parvovirus B19 transmission by heat-treated clotting factor concentrates.** *Transfusion* 2002, **42(11)**:1473-1481.
87. Koppelman MH, Cuyppers HT, Emrich T, Zaaier HL: **Quantitative real-time detection of parvovirus B19 DNA in plasma.** *Transfusion* 2004, **44(1)**:97-103.
88. Gowland P, Fontana S, Niederhauser C, Taleghani BM: **Molecular and serologic tracing of a transfusion-transmitted hepatitis A virus.** *Transfusion* 2004, **44(11)**:1555-1561.
89. Diwan AH, Stubbs JR, Carnahan GE: **Transmission of hepatitis A via WBC-reduced RBCs and FFP from a single donation.** *Transfusion* 2003, **43(4)**:536-540.
90. Boxall E, Herborn A, Kochethu G, Pratt G, Adams D, Ijaz S, Teo CG: **Transfusion-transmitted hepatitis E in a 'nonhyperendemic' country.** *Transfus Med* 2006, **16(2)**:79-83.
91. Matsubayashi K, Nagaoka Y, Sakata H, Sato S, Fukai K, Kato T, Takahashi K, Mishiro S, Imai M, Takeda N, Ikeda H: **Transfusion-transmitted hepatitis E caused by apparently indigenous hepatitis E virus strain in Hokkaido, Japan.** *Transfusion* 2004, **44(6)**:934-940.
92. Nishizawa T, Okamoto H, Konishi K, Yoshizawa H, Miyakawa Y, Mayumi M: **A novel DNA virus (TTV) associated with elevated transaminase levels in posttransfusion hepatitis of unknown etiology.** *Biochem Biophys Res Commun* 1997, **241(1)**:92-97.
93. Tanaka Y, Primi D, Wang RY, Umemura T, Yeo AE, Mizokami M, Alter HJ, Shih JW: **Genomic and molecular evolutionary analysis of a newly identified infectious agent (SEN virus) and its relationship to the TT virus family.** *J Infect Dis* 2001, **183(3)**:359-367.
94. Hitzler WE, Runkel S: **Prevalence, persistence and liver enzyme levels of HGV RNA-positive blood donors determined by large-scale screening and transmission by blood components.** *Clin Lab* 2004, **50(1-2)**:25-31.
95. Zhong S, Yeo W, Lin CK, Lin XR, Tang MW, Johnson PJ: **Quantitative and genotypic analysis of TT virus infection in Chinese blood donors.** *Transfusion* 2001, **41(8)**:1001-1007.
96. Jeon MJ, Shin JH, Suh SP, Lim YC, Ryang DW: **TT virus and hepatitis G virus infections in Korean blood donors and patients with chronic liver disease.** *World J Gastroenterol* 2003, **9(4)**:741-744.
97. Akiba J, Umemura T, Alter HJ, Kojiro M, Tabor E: **SEN virus: epidemiology and characteristics of a transfusion-transmitted virus.** *Transfusion* 2005, **45(7)**:1084-1088.
98. Kumar D, Humar A: **Emerging viral infections in transplant recipients.** *Curr Opin Infect Dis* 2005, **18(4)**:337-341.
99. Kitchen AD, Chiodini PL: **Malaria and blood transfusion.** *Vox Sang* 2006, **90(2)**:77-84.
100. World Health Organization: **Malaria.** *Fact Sheet No 94* [<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs094/en/>].
101. Kinde G, Oke J, Gnahoui I, Massougbdji A: **[The risk of malaria transmission by blood transfusion at Cotonou, Benin].** *Sante* 2000, **10(6)**:389-392.
102. Frey-Wettstein M, Maier A, Markwalder K, Munch U: **A case of transfusion transmitted malaria in Switzerland.** *Swiss Med Wkly* 2001, **131(21-22)**:320.
103. Purdy E, Perry E, Gorlin J, Jensen K: **Transfusion-transmitted malaria: unpreventable by current donor exclusion guidelines?** *Transfusion* 2004, **44(3)**:464.
104. Alkassab F, Ericsson CD: **Transfusion-transmitted malaria: how satisfactory are current preventative measures?** *Am J Med* 2006, **119(5)**:e1-2.
105. Reesink HW: **European strategies against the parasite transfusion risk.** *Transfus Clin Biol* 2005, **12(1)**:1-4.
106. Mungai M, Tegtmeier G, Chamberland M, Parise M: **Transfusion-transmitted malaria in the United States from 1963 through 1999.** *N Engl J Med* 2001, **344(26)**:1973-1978.
107. Seed CR, Kitchen A, Davis TM: **The current status and potential role of laboratory testing to prevent transfusion-transmitted malaria.** *Transfus Med Rev* 2005, **19(3)**:229-240.
108. American Association of Blood Banks: **Standards for Blood Banks and Transfusion Services.** 21st edition. Edited by: Banks AAB. Bethesda, MD; 2002.
109. Kitchen A, Mijovic A, Hewitt P: **Transfusion-transmitted malaria: current donor selection guidelines are not sufficient.** *Vox Sang* 2005, **88(3)**:200-201.
110. Chiodini PL, Hartley S, Hewitt PE, Barbara JA, Lalloo K, Bligh J, Voller A: **Evaluation of a malaria antibody ELISA and its value in reducing potential wastage of red cell donations from blood donors exposed to malaria, with a note on a case of transfusion-transmitted malaria.** *Vox Sang* 1997, **73(3)**:143-148.
111. Silvie O, Thellier M, Rosenheim M, Detry A, Lavigne P, Danis M, Mazier D: **Potential value of Plasmodium falciparum-associated antigen and antibody detection for screening of blood donors to prevent transfusion-transmitted malaria.** *Transfusion* 2002, **42(3)**:357-362.
112. Leiby DA, Herron RM Jr., Read EJ, Lenes BA, Stumpf RJ: **Trypanosoma cruzi in Los Angeles and Miami blood donors: impact of evolving donor demographics on seroprevalence and implications for transfusion transmission.** *Transfusion* 2002, **42(5)**:549-555.
113. Leiby DA: **Threats to blood safety posed by emerging protozoan pathogens.** *Vox Sang* 2004, **87 Suppl 2**:120-122.
114. Schmunis GA, Cruz JR: **Safety of the blood supply in Latin America.** *Clin Microbiol Rev* 2005, **18(1)**:12-29.
115. Cardo LJ: **Leishmania: risk to the blood supply.** *Transfusion* 2006, **46(9)**:1641-1645.
116. Saito-Ito A, Tsuji M, Wei Q, He S, Matsui T, Kohsaki M, Arai S, Kamiyama T, Hioki K, Ishihara C: **Transfusion-acquired, autochthonous human babesiosis in Japan: isolation of Babesia microti-like parasites with hu-RBC-SCID mice.** *J Clin Microbiol* 2000, **38(12)**:4511-4516.
117. Leiby DA: **Babesiosis and blood transfusion: flying under the radar.** *Vox Sang* 2006, **90(3)**:157-165.

118. Hunter N, Foster J, Chong A, McCutcheon S, Parnham D, Eaton S, MacKenzie C, Houston F: **Transmission of prion diseases by blood transfusion.** *J Gen Virol* 2002, **83**(Pt 11):2897-2905.
119. Llewelyn CA, Hewitt PE, Knight RS, Amar K, Cousens S, Mackenzie J, Will RG: **Possible transmission of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease by blood transfusion.** *Lancet* 2004, **363**(9407):417-421.
120. Peden AH, Head MW, Ritchie DL, Bell JE, Ironside JW: **Preclinical vCJD after blood transfusion in a PRNP codon 129 heterozygous patient.** *Lancet* 2004, **364**(9433):527-529.
121. Health Protection Agency: **New case of transfusion-associated variant-CJD.** *CDR weekly* 2006, **16**(6):.
122. Hewitt PE, Llewelyn CA, Mackenzie J, Will RG: **Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and blood transfusion: results of the UK Transfusion Medicine Epidemiological Review study.** *Vox Sang* 2006, **91**(3):221-230.
123. Ghani AC, Ferguson NM, Donnelly CA, Hagenaars TJ, Anderson RM: **Estimation of the number of people incubating variant CJD.** *Lancet* 1998, **352**(9137):1353-1354.
124. Aznar JA, Molina R, Montoro JM: **Factor VIII/von Willebrand factor complex in methylene blue-treated fresh plasma.** *Transfusion* 1999, **39**(7):748-750.
125. Hellstern P: **Solvent/detergent-treated plasma: composition, efficacy, and safety.** *Curr Opin Hematol* 2004, **11**(5):346-350.
126. Pelletier JP, Transue S, Snyder EL: **Pathogen inactivation techniques.** *Best Pract Res Clin Haematol* 2006, **19**(1):205-242.
127. **Amotosalen: Allogeneic Cellular Immunotherapies system, INTERCEPT Plasma System, INTERCEPT Platelet System, S 59.** *BioDrugs* 2003, **17**(1):66-68.
128. Pineda A, McCullough J, Benjamin RJ, Cable R, Strauss RG, Burgstaler E, Porter S, Lin L, Metzler P, Conlan MG: **Pathogen inactivation of platelets with a photochemical treatment with amotosalen HCl and ultraviolet light: process used in the SPRINT trial.** *Transfusion* 2006, **46**(4):562-571.
129. Murphy S, Snyder E, Cable R, Slichter SJ, Strauss RG, McCullough J, Lin JS, Corash L, Conlan MG: **Platelet dose consistency and its effect on the number of platelet transfusions for support of thrombocytopenia: an analysis of the SPRINT trial of platelets photochemically treated with amotosalen HCl and ultraviolet A light.** *Transfusion* 2006, **46**(1):24-33.
130. Knutson F, Alfonso R, Dupuis K, Mayaudon V, Lin L, Corash L, Hogman CF: **Photochemical inactivation of bacteria and HIV in buffy-coat-derived platelet concentrates under conditions that preserve in vitro platelet function.** *Vox Sang* 2000, **78**(4):209-216.
131. Van Voorhis WC, Barrett LK, Eastman RT, Alfonso R, Dupuis K: **Trypanosoma cruzi inactivation in human platelet concentrates and plasma by a psoralen (amotosalen HCl) and long-wavelength UV.** *Antimicrob Agents Chemother* 2003, **47**(2):475-479.
132. McCullough J, Vesole DH, Benjamin RJ, Slichter SJ, Pineda A, Snyder E, Stadtmayer EA, Lopez-Plaza I, Coutre S, Strauss RG, Goodnough LT, Friley JL, Raife T, Cable R, Murphy S, Howard F, Davis K, Lin JS, Metzler P, Corash L, Koutsoukos A, Lin L, Buchholz DH, Conlan MG: **Therapeutic efficacy and safety of platelets treated with a photochemical process for pathogen inactivation: the SPRINT Trial.** *Blood* 2004, **104**(5):1534-1541.
133. Benjamin RJ, McCullough J, Mintz PD, Snyder E, Spotnitz WD, Rizzo RJ, Wages D, Lin JS, Wood L, Corash L, Conlan MG: **Therapeutic efficacy and safety of red blood cells treated with a chemical process (S-303) for pathogen inactivation: a Phase III clinical trial in cardiac surgery patients.** *Transfusion* 2005, **45**(11):1739-1749.
134. Zavizion B, Pereira M, de Melo Jorge M, Serebryanik D, Mather TN, Chapman J, Miller NJ, Alford B, Bzik DJ, Purmal A: **Inactivation of protozoan parasites in red blood cells using INACTINE PENI 10 chemistry.** *Transfusion* 2004, **44**(5):731-738.
135. Zavizion B, Serebryanik D, Chapman J, Alford B, Purmal A: **Inactivation of Gram-negative and Gram-positive bacteria in red cell concentrates using INACTINE PENI 10 chemistry.** *Vox Sang* 2004, **87**(3):143-149.
136. Mather T, Takeda T, Tassello J, Ohagen A, Serebryanik D, Kramer E, Brown F, Tesh R, Alford B, Chapman J, Lazo A: **West Nile virus in blood: stability, distribution, and susceptibility to PENI 10 inactivation.** *Transfusion* 2003, **43**(8):1029-1037.
137. Ohagen A, Gibaja V, Horrigan J, Lunderville D, Jayarama V, Marcello J, Chapman J, Lazo A: **Induction of latent human cytomegalovirus by conventional gamma irradiation and prevention by treatment with INACTINE PENI 10.** *Vox Sang* 2004, **87**(1):1-9.
138. Corbin F 3rd: **Pathogen inactivation of blood components: current status and introduction of an approach using riboflavin as a photosensitizer.** *Int J Hematol* 2002, **76** Suppl 2:253-257.
139. Goodrich RP: **The use of riboflavin for the inactivation of pathogens in blood products.** *Vox Sang* 2000, **78** Suppl 2:211-215.
140. Goodrich RP, Li J, Pieters H, Crookes R, Roodt J, Heyns Adu P: **Correlation of in vitro platelet quality measurements with in vivo platelet viability in human subjects.** *Vox Sang* 2006, **90**(4):279-285.
141. Fast LD, Dileone G, Li J, Goodrich R: **Functional inactivation of white blood cells by Mirasol treatment.** *Transfusion* 2006, **46**(4):642-648.
142. Cardo LJ, Rentas FJ, Ketchum L, Salata J, Harman R, Melvin W, Weina PJ, Mendez J, Reddy H, Goodrich R: **Pathogen inactivation of Leishmania donovani infatum in plasma and platelet concentrates using riboflavin and ultraviolet light.** *Vox Sang* 2006, **90**(2):85-91.
143. Ruane PH, Edrich R, Gamp D, Keil SD, Leonard RL, Goodrich RP: **Photochemical inactivation of selected viruses and bacteria in platelet concentrates using riboflavin and light.** *Transfusion* 2004, **44**(6):877-885.
144. Engelfriet CP, Reesink HW, Brand B, Levy G, Williamson LM, Menitove JE, Heier HE, Jorgensen J, Politis C, Seyfried H, Smit Sibinga CT, Faber JC, Vesga MA, Selivanov E, Danilova T, Tadokoro K, Krusius T, Hafner V, Snopak I, Reali G, d'Almeida Goncalves J: **Haemovigilance systems.** *Vox Sang* 1999, **77**(2):110-120.
145. Debeir J, Noel L, Aullen J, Frette C, Sari F, Mai MP, Cosson A: **The French haemovigilance system.** *Vox Sang* 1999, **77**(2):77-81.

Publish with **BioMed Central** and every scientist can read your work free of charge

"BioMed Central will be the most significant development for disseminating the results of biomedical research in our lifetime."

Sir Paul Nurse, Cancer Research UK

Your research papers will be:

- available free of charge to the entire biomedical community
- peer reviewed and published immediately upon acceptance
- cited in PubMed and archived on PubMed Central
- yours — you keep the copyright

Submit your manuscript here:  
http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/publishing\_adv.asp

