

Blood and Blood Products

Standard 7



FACTSHEET



Clinical leaders and senior managers of a health service organisation implement systems to ensure the safe, appropriate, efficient and effective use of blood and blood products. Clinicians and other members of the workforce use the blood and blood product safety systems.

Australia has one of the safest blood supplies in the world. There are comprehensive national regulations that cover all aspects of blood donation and processing of blood and blood products. Blood products are stored and delivered to health services under regulated conditions, and are carefully stored and managed within health services and laboratories.

However, the transfusion of blood and blood products is not without risk and can lead to complications and adverse outcomes for patients. Blood and blood products should only be given when clearly indicated and the expected benefits to the patient are likely to outweigh the potential hazards.

The main areas that jeopardise safe transfusion are: the blood sample for cross matching is taken from the wrong patient; the wrong name is written on the blood sample tube; the patient did not need the transfusion; and bedside verification is not done correctly to ensure that the right blood product is being given to the right patient at the right time and in the correct manner.¹



The aim of this Standard is to ensure safe, appropriate, effective and efficient blood management systems are in place. This aim supports the objectives of the Stewardship Statement endorsed by all governments.²

In brief, this Standard requires that:

- Health service organisations have governance systems in place for the safe and appropriate prescribing and clinical use of blood and blood products.
- The clinical workforce accurately records a patient's blood and blood product transfusion history and indications for use of blood and blood products.
- Health service organisations have systems to receive, store, transport and monitor wastage of blood and blood products safely and efficiently.
- Patients and carers are informed about the risks and benefits of using blood and blood products, and the available alternatives when a plan for treatment is developed.

Further Information

A full copy of the Blood and Blood Products Standard is contained in the *National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards*. It describes the criteria, items and actions required for health services to meet this Standard and is available on the Commission's website at www.safetyandquality.gov.au.

Resources and Tools

The following tools and resources are available to assist with the implementation of this Standard:

- National Blood Authority Appropriate Use Initiatives
- National Blood Authority Guidelines
- National Blood Authority BloodSafe e-Learning
- National Association of Testing Authorities.

Informed Consent

Informed consent means a dialogue has occurred between the patient (and carers) and doctor about the risks, benefits and alternatives to transfusion. As a result of this discussion the patient should:

- know why a transfusion is being recommended
- be aware of the risks and benefits
- be aware of the alternatives
- have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- give consent for the transfusion.

Facts and figures

The risks associated with transfusions of blood products usually fall into two categories:

- errors in procedure (such as patient identification or blood sample labelling errors and administration of blood products to the wrong patient)
- transfusion reactions (for example, fevers and chills) and bacterial infections.

During 2008–09 there were 294 blood product serious adverse events reported in Australia – 241 involved febrile and allergic reactions, while 22 involved incorrect blood component transfusion.¹

References

1. National Blood Authority. Australian Haemovigilance Report 2010, A Report by the National Blood Authority Haemovigilance Advisory Committee. Canberra: National Blood Authority, 2010.
2. National Blood Authority. Stewardship Statement. <http://www.nba.gov.au/policy/stewardship-statement.html> (cited 8 June 2011).



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