How do we secure a safe blood supply during the current corona crisis?

The blood donor organization perspective, Denmark

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Presenter:

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The blood donor setup

Donor organization
450 volunteers
7 FTE staff

5 Regions

180,000 donors
284,000 donations in 2019

5 Blood Centres
The National Strategy

- 6 Apr: First relaxation of lock-down announced. Strategy: Slow and controlled reopening of society
Corona Preparedness Team

- 9 Mar: Meeting suggested. Informal team
  - CEO’s and key staff from blood banks
  - Professors of Clinical Immunology
  - The Danish Society of Clinical Immunology
  - The Blood Donor Organization

- Video conferences as needed
First phase
Objective: Protecting blood supply

- Information campaign to raise awareness.
  Key messages:
  - It’s safe to donate blood
  - The blood banks are open as usual
  - The hygiene level is raised – hand rubbing alcohol available, all surfaces cleaned several times a day, keep safety distance
  - These measures are to protect donors and staff
  - SARS-CoV-2 is not transmitted through blood
  - COVID-19 patients are not treated with blood transfusion
First phase
Further measures considered

- Protection masks
- Conversion of plasma collections to whole blood collections (possible, as donors are drawn from the same pool and none of them are paid)
First phase
Donor deferral measures

• 27 Feb: 4 weeks quarantine after travel to 7 high risk countries
• 10 Mar: Quarantine after travel to high risk countries adjusted to 2 weeks, 1 high risk country added. Quarantine 2 weeks after contact with person with known COVID-19 infection
• 19 Mar: Quarantine after travel to all foreign destinations
First phase

**Donor communication, primarily Facebook**

- 27 Feb: Travel quarantine
- 10 Mar: It’s safe to give blood, increased safety measures
- 12 Mar: Blood centres still open – video
- 13 Mar: Safety measures in blood bank – video
- 15 Mar: Volunteers – maybe you can help in the blood centres?
- 16 Mar: New record in plasma collection on a Sunday!
- 18 Mar: Still need of blood after mobile blood drives visiting companies and educational institutions are cancelled – media attention.
Second phase
Objective: Balancing blood supply

• Information campaign to praise the donors (as we don’t really need their effort right now)

Key messages:
• Your support has resulted in filled stocks of blood
• Make an appointment to give blood – and keep the appointment
Second phase
Donor communication, primarily Facebook

- 20 Mar: It’s safe to give blood - always make an appointment first
- 22 Mar: Remember to sign up as stem cell donor as well!
- (22 Mar: New donor selection criteria, e.g. MSM allowed. Planned several months ago)
- 2 Apr: Demand for blood dropping, fewer time slots in the blood banks – praise of the donors
Third phase
Objective: Helping society

• Testing of all collections for antibodies in order to estimate the level of herd immunity
• Convalescent plasma

Key messages:
• Yet another way to do something good for others
• You will get your own test result although it is not certain on the individual level
• Don’t sign up as donor just to get a test result
• Don’t call the blood centre, they will call you
Third phase
Donor communication, Facebook, web, pressrelease

• 4 Apr: Test announced (pressrelease)
• 6 Apr: First tests taken. Information video and Q&A’s on Facebook
• 8 Apr: First test results announced. 22 positive out of 1,487 donations. Adjusting for expected false negatives and false positives: 1,9 % of donor population have antibodies
• 11 Apr: 72 out of 3.989 positive, still 1,9 %
• 17 Apr: All 5 regions now collecting convalescent plasma for double blinded research study
New donors recruited

New donors signed up / day

2020

2019 Avg.
Visitors - web page bloddonor.dk
Next phase
Objective: Back to normal?

• Stocks are still full. No free time slots the next three weeks up to the next three months (varies), so no recruitment activities
• Still need of information updates and test results on a running basis
• Window for gaining public and political support for strategic self-supply of plasma open, when the worst part of the COVID-19 crisis is over?
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