

## Comment on: Blood discard rate and the prevalence of infectious and contagious diseases in blood donors from provincial towns of the state of Paraná, Brazil

Danielle Venturini

Universidade Estadual de Londrina – UEL,  
Londrina, PR, Brazil

The safety of blood products from their source, the blood donor, until their use in the recipient is of the utmost importance. Blood banks have a constant concern to find the ideal profile of the donor with the potential of repeat donations, in order to target campaigns towards this group. The importance of these donors should be stressed, as the rejection rate due to positive serology or high-risk behavior is low. Blood donation is regulated by the Brazilian Health Ministry through the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA)<sup>(1)</sup>. One study presented in this issue of the *Revista Brasileira de Hematologia e Hemoterapia*<sup>(2)</sup> investigated the predominance of infections-contagious diseases through positive serological markers in blood donors of the Regional Blood Center in Maringá, Parana between January 2011 to December 2011. This current study showed that the predominance of infectious diseases among the blood donors was 1.55%. These results demonstrate a decrease in seropositivity in this population, which could be explained by the effectiveness of clinical and serological screening. Additionally, 52.5% of discarded blood bags by serological screening were characterized by the anti-HBc serological marker, which demonstrated a high prevalence for the hepatitis B virus in the blood donor population. The prevalences of serological markers were: anti-HBc (1.03%), HBsAg (0.07%), syphilis (0.35%), anti-HCV (0.04%), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV - 0.02%) and Chagas disease (0.02%). No positivity occurred in this study with respect to human T-lymphotropic virus (HTLV) I/II markers. A study conducted by Salles et al. in 2001 showed that the prevalence of infectious diseases among donors was: 0.04% for HIV, 0.21% for hepatitis C virus (HCV), 0.06% for HTLV, 0.14% for Chagas' disease, and 1.10% for syphilis. For hepatitis B virus, the prevalences found were 0.14% for anti-HBc and HBsAg, 1.68% for anti-HBc and anti-HBs, and 1.67% for anti-HBc in isolation<sup>(3)</sup>. As new technologies are developed, the discovery of new infectious agents and the reemergence of old threats are an ongoing challenge in blood banks. I believe that similar studies should be encouraged in order to reinforce the importance of characterizing the prevalence of these serological markers in the blood donor population. In conclusion, this study is of great scientific relevance and reinforces the importance in establishing the prevalence of serological markers in blood donors. These results increase the knowledge about the role of the educational measures that have been carried out and may support the structuring of new awareness-raising campaigns for spontaneous blood donation.

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#### Corresponding author:

Danielle Venturini  
Universidade Estadual de Londrina – UEL  
Department of Pathology, Clinical Analysis  
and Toxicology  
Av. Robert Koch, nº 60, Bairro Cervejaria  
86038-440 Londrina, PR, Brazil  
danielle.venturini@bol.com.br

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