



Book Reviews

The History of Blood Transfusion in Sub-Saharan Africa, William H. Schneider, Ohio University Press, 2013. p. 239, ISBN: 9780821420379.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the site of human origin, contains the greatest human diversity, and has the greatest stock of resources upon which the planet's future will depend. Yet, for most of us, it is synonymous with poverty and the tragedy of HIV. This book begins with the question of whether blood transfusions throughout sub-Saharan Africa were a substantial contributor to the initial spread of HIV. To address this question, the author attempted the daunting task of discovering and reporting the frequency of transfusions in Africa throughout the 20th century.

The history of transfusion activity is pieced together from records of the Red Cross, World Health Organization, governments, and major hospitals of the continent. Information is drawn from many locations and principally from Uganda, the Congo, Kenya, and Senegal. The reader is guided to the origins of early transfusion experiments at the start of the 20th century through periods of episodic advances leading up to World War II. The second half of the century saw a roller coaster of activity somewhat unique to Africa. Transfusion practice grew dramatically during the decade of the 1960s as African nations gained political independence. Two patterns emerged. Nations such as Uganda established centralized transfusion systems patterned after the Red Cross, whereas other nations (Congo, Kenya) relied upon local hospital collections-on-demand. Both systems fell into disarray, and total transfusions then declined not only as a result of periods of political unrest that followed independence (eg, the national disaster of Idi Amin in Uganda) but also as a result of the world economic recession, which followed the oil crisis of the 1970s. Transfusion activity revived in the latter decades of the century as the HIV crisis demanded investment in more modern methods of collection, testing, and distribution.

The book is divided into 3 broad sections. In the first section, Schneider presents a chronologic history of transfusion development in 3 periods: before World War II, the period between the World War and the time of African national independence, and the period after independence. Next, he presents a useful chapter devoted to information on the characteristics of transfusion recipients (“who got the blood”) and a chapter devoted to blood donors. These chapters have well-referenced sources that show the progression of development of transfusion practice and clinical demand through the decades. Finally, in the third section, Schneider discusses transfusion in the HIV era and places sub-Saharan transfusion practice in the broader context of global health. Throughout the text, he takes a pan-African perspective drawing on examples from several nations, often with subsections devoted to what is known for individual countries. For readers hungry for the details, the book has useful tables and figures of transfusion activity by region—primary data that were earned, I suspect, only by difficult searching. To the author's enduring credit, the book is enriched with 36 pages of chapter notes and references, an extensive bibliography, and index.

The text is not without its shortcomings. The author had to work with spotty data given the limited records available, and as a result, generalizations are sometimes made based on evidence best described as “examples.” The writing style is a bit rambling at times (but so it was with Proust), and the author has a tendency to repeat his insights a bit too often. These shortcomings did not detract from the value of reading.

I would highly recommend this book for its factual content to anyone interested in the history of blood transfusion in sub-Saharan Africa. Those with a more passing interest in this area may wish to read a summary of this topic by the same author published in *Transfusion Medicine Reviews* 2013;27(1):21–28. I congratulate the author and suspect that his effort will remain the definitive account of the history of transfusion in sub-Saharan Africa for years to come.

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Quality Management in Transfusion Medicine. Cees Th. Smit Sibinga, Editor Nova Science Publishers, 2013; pp. 518 with illustrations, supplement, and index ISBN 978-1626186651.

The name Cees Smit Sibinga will be familiar to many readers of these pages. Dr Smit Sibinga has enjoyed a distinguished career as a thought leader in Transfusion Medicine and has been a devoted teacher of the profession to the next generation of practitioners. He continues in that spirit as Editor of this book published by Nova Biomedical as part of the series “Recent Advances in Hematology Research.”

The book consists of 14 chapters and a supplement devoted to Quality Management in Transfusion Medicine and draws on contributors from around the world who are familiar names and acknowledged experts in our field. An informative and well written opening chapter on the history of quality management is followed by equally high-quality chapters covering a variety of topics of practical focus including vein to vein process management, information technology in transfusion management, hemovigilance, event management, patient safety, blood safety, healthcare economics, and knowledge management. Dr Smit Sibinga has long been a champion of advancing transfusion medicine in resource-restricted nations, and true to these ideals, the book concludes with a chapter devoted specifically to transfusion quality in low income nations.

Among such a wealth of material, it is unfair to select specific chapters or topics to highlight. However, to give a flavor for the content, I would mention the detailed and well illustrated chapter by Smit Sibinga, Christian Seidl, Eduardo Nunes, and James Aubuchon where readers will learn about the structure and organization of ISO9001 systems, good manufacturing practice, and specific differences between the quality management systems used in transfusion in the United States and Europe. The chapter on Process Management provides simple and useful illustrations for process mapping, flow charts, and data analysis using Levy-Jennings (or Shewart) style graphics. Lorna Williamson and Michael Strong combine their considerable talents and experience to provide a review of hemovigilance that highlights the common features and differences in approach on the two sides of the Atlantic. James Stubbs, Gwen Jones, Cheryl Nimitz, and Valerie Halling offer a thorough and practical guide to dealing with events, mishaps, errors, and deviations from standard procedure. This chapter gives specific useful approaches to developing a culture of safety within a transfusion organization incorporating skills taken from causal tree analysis, statistical process control, and process mapping. Mike Murphy, Sunita Saxena, and Smit Sibinga provide a clear perspective on quality management at the clinical interface in the hospital addressing issues such as decision to transfuse, informed consent, the details of blood requests, blood issue and distribution, and perioperative blood management. The views of blood donors and

the larger society and religious groups to which donors belong are presented in an interesting chapter by Ton Los, Sarah Mutegombwa, and Che Lin Kit. Here you will find information on the diverse views regarding blood donation held by Buddhists, Hindus, Moravians, Mormons, Sikhs, Unitarians and many more. Health technology assessment and matters of cost-effectiveness are reviewed by Marinus van Hulst, Maarten Postma, and Brian Custer in a chapter that again combines international experts to provide a broad perspective on the topic.

All in all, I found this book to be a comprehensive, very readable, and practical treatise on quality management in transfusion medicine. Each chapter is well referenced and rich in simple clear illustrations. Quality Management in Transfusion Medicine is a topic often scattered over diverse source material. Readers searching for a single, high-quality, up-to-date reference addressing quality management in transfusion from soup to nuts need look no further.

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