**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**Haemoglobin deferral criteria**

**Notes**

This procedure must be adapted to conform to local requirements and to the test systems, reagents and equipment that are available to each organization.

1. **Introduction**

All prospective blood donors undergo a screening process to assess their suitability to donate on that particular day. The selection process must include an assessment of each donor carried out by a suitably qualified individual. Any unsuitable donor should be deferred either temporarily or permanently.

The primary purpose of haemoglobin deferral is to safeguard the donor, i.e. preventing an anaemic individual from exacerbating their condition. The second purpose is to ensure that the patient receives quality product, i.e. that the Hb content of the donated blood meets the required criteria.

It has been well recognised that even short-term deferrals may have a long term impact on donor behaviour, and ultimately on donor retention. In managing donor deferrals, it is essential to use appropriate strategies to maintain donor motivation and secure an early return to active donation at the end of the deferral period.

Haemoglobin deferral is common in female donors and regular male donors as they are more prone to depleted iron stores and consequently low haemoglobin levels.

1. **Purpose and Scope**

This procedure is to be used by authorised personnel in the blood donation clinic when deferring donors who have been found to have Hb levels below 125 g/L.

1. **Acronyms and Definitions**
   1. **Hb –** Haemoglobin.
   2. **SOP –** Standard Operating Procedure.
2. **Materials and equipment required**
   1. Donor’s Medical History Form with the quantitative Hb result.
3. **Safety**

There are no significant safety concerns associated with this procedure.

1. **Responsible**

The authorized donor personnel dealing with the donor deferral is responsible for all the activities described in this procedure.

1. **Procedure**
   1. Explain the significance of the Hb result to the donor and answer any questions that the donor may have.
   2. Provide the donor with information regarding a diet that will improve red cell production, including foodstuffs that are rich in iron.
   3. Deferral periods for all donors:
      1. If the Hb is 124 g/L to 105 g/L, defer the donor for three months.
      2. If the Hb is below 105 g/L, defer the donor for six months and recommend that he/she consults his/her doctor.
   4. Explain to the donor that the deferral is in the donor’s own best interests.
   5. Explain the length of the deferral clearly to encourage the donor to view this merely as a short term interruption to their donating career.
   6. Encourage the donor to return at the end of the deferral period. Providing the donor with the date that they can next donate can be useful in this regard.
   7. Record the deferral period on the donor’s Medical History Form.
2. **Records and forms**
   1. The completion and retention of the records and forms mentioned in this procedure are detailed in SOPs that describe related procedures.
3. **References**
   1. Nil.
4. **Revision Summary**

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| **REVISION NUMBER** | **DATE** | **REVISION DETAILS** | **REASON FOR REVISION** |
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