

Blood is Life



**Africa Society
for Blood
Transfusion**

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AfSBT e-Newsletter



November 2016

AfSBT is busy convening a new Education Committee and it is hoped that this committee will be able to meet early next year, to discuss how to approach the large and challenging project of bringing education and training materials to the AfSBT website, and how to manage training and upskilling of professionals in

the transfusion medicine field. Added to this, ISBT is continuing to work with us in order to provide access to the ISBT ePortal from 2017 – for AfSBT members in good standing. There was an article on this opportunity in the October issue of the newsletter, and see below for a follow-up message.

If you were fortunate enough to have attended the fantastic AfSBT congress held in Kigali last June, you will have seen the drone in the exhibition tent. This project has continued to advance, and this issue

brings you up to date news on the drones, and a medley of photographs to show you the launch, and also what this fantastic innovation can do. AfSBT also congratulates the blood service in Swaziland, which was recognized during the AABB meeting in Orlando. You may have seen this announced on the AABB Smart-Briefs:

<http://www.aabb.org/programs/publications/Pages/smartbrief.aspx>

Beryl Armstrong – editor

The ISBT Academy ePortal

Words provided by ISBT

Learning and sharing of knowledge via the internet has revolutionised the educational sector. Many institutions offer electronic courses for their students who are trained through a computer, at a place, pace and time that suit them the best. ISBT is keeping step with these developments with its Academy ePortal. One of the main objectives of ISBT is to offer education to all members of the society, even to those who don't have the possibility to attend congresses or training events. As part of this strategy the e-learning portal was developed, which uses communications technologies for computer enabled transfer of skills and knowledge.

The ePortal was officially launched during the ISBT international congress in Seoul in 2014; this followed a 'soft launch' at the European congress in 2013. Three years later, the Academy ePortal is home to an expanding register of various congress-related materials including webcasts, learning quizzes, ePosters and abstracts. ISBT members can watch presentations from past congresses and test their knowledge by the associated learning quizzes. While watching a presentation, the viewer can ask questions or start a discussion and rate the talks afterwards.

The ePortal also includes a Guideline Library which is an organised repository of links to more than 300 transfusion medicine related guidelines and standards documents from a good spread of organisations around the world. The Guideline topics include Clinical, Laboratory, Quality and Haemovigilance, Donors, Processing and Regulation. Several text books and selected articles of ISBT's journals Vox Sanguinis and The Science Series are also featured in this online directory.

And there is more! The ISBT team continuously explores new possibilities to reach out to those who are willing to expand their knowledge. A new feature entitled Personal Reflections will be added soon, which will include interviews with experts about how their career developed and inspiring talks about transfusion medicine related subjects.

During the ISBT European congress in 2017 ISBT will further trial live broadcasts from selected sessions. This follows on from a pilot initiative in 2013 during the Asia congress in Kuala Lumpur.

The ePortal is easy to navigate around, material can be found by searching via the topics page, which features the 11 topics related to transfusion medicine from the donor to the patient and more. It also includes a short instructional video.

Cours de Sécurité transfusionnelle Institut Pasteur Paris 2017

A two-week short course entitled "**Securite Transfusionnelle Infectieuse**" and given in French, will be held at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, May 9 – 19 2017. The intended audience includes medical doctors, PhD's and senior technicians working in transfusion medicine and who wish to learn how to accomplish their own research projects. The course includes morning lectures on the current state-of-the-art in transfusion medicine and clinical research methodology, as well as afternoon workshops during which each trainee writes their own 5-6 page research protocol with mentorship from the course faculty. Scholarship funds cover a round-trip airline ticket and tuition fees for each accepted trainee; trainees must fund their own accommodation and living expenses in Paris. Applications must be submitted online at the following website: <http://www.pasteur.fr/en/teaching/institut-pasteur-courses/epidemiology-and-public-health-theme/securite-transfusionnelle-infectieuse>. The deadline for application is **January 26, 2017**; any questions should be directed to the professors listed on the website.

Drones begin delivering blood in Rwanda



On 14 Oct 2016, Rwanda launched the world's first national drone delivery system, which will be used to deliver blood to patients. The drones, manufactured by California robotics company ZIPLINE, will begin delivering blood to 21 transfusing facilities in the western and northern parts of Rwanda. Rwandan President Paul Kagame launched the programme at a colorful ceremony at the distribution centre in Muhanga District, Southern province.

The distribution center houses 15 custom-built drones, known as "Zips," which can fly up to 150 kilometres, round-trip, and carry up to 1.5 kg of blood. Hospitals can order blood via text message and have it parachuted to their location in 15 minutes, on average, eliminating the need for onboard refrigeration or insulation.

The hope is that Zipline's system can help reach people in desperate need of transfusions, including mothers suffering from postpartum hemorrhaging, which is the leading cause of maternal mortality worldwide. Zipline began its first blood deliveries and plans to expand to eastern Rwanda by early next year.

Rwanda has two methods of blood collection - from 100% voluntary non-remunerated blood donors.

- Whole blood donations: blood is processed into 4 different components; red cell concentrates (RCC), platelet concentrates (PC), fresh frozen plasma (FFP) and cryoprecipitated anti-haemophilic factor (Cryo-AHF).
- Apheresis donations: an apheresis machine is used to collect only the required blood component with other components being immediately re-infused into the donor.

Hospitals are able to store only RhD positive RCC in the hospital laboratories. RhD negative donations, PC, FFP & Cryo-AHF are issued to hospitals only on demand. Hospitals are responsible for collecting such units from Rwanda's five Regional blood banks.

This system has, however, been faced by some challenges that the Drone system has come to address:

- In order to have sufficient blood in stock for patients, in addition to logistical insufficiency, hospitals order more units than they can use, and 6% of all units ordered therefore reach expiry date. The Drone system is expected to reduce this wastage to 1%.
- Vehicles take 2-4 hours for a round trip to deliver blood to hospitals. The Drone system is expected to use 10-45 minutes.
- Some blood components such as PC, FFP & Cryo-AHF are usually under-requisitioned, because hospitals lack sufficient vehicles to make frequent trips to collect them from NCBT regional blood banks. Drones will address this challenge too.

Drones begin delivering blood in Rwanda - Photos



His Excellency, Paul KAGAME, listens to explanations given by Dr KATARE Swaibu, Head of the Rwanda National Blood Services, about blood safety in Rwanda, the current delivery system using vehicles, the challenges involved, and solutions to accompany using the Drone delivery system.



Mr Keller Rinaudo, CEO and founder of ZIPLINE INC (right side of His Excellency Paul KAGAME), demonstrates how the Drones work.



His Excellency Paul KAGAME poses for a group photo with ZIPLINE staff and Government of Rwanda Officials who worked on the success of the project (Second row on the left: Dr KATARE Swaibu, Hon Diane GASHUMBA-Minister of Health, Hon Jean Philbert NSENGIMANA-Minister of Youth and ICT).

Drone Launch carrier



His Excellency Paul KAGAME officially launches blood delivery using Drones in Rwanda. The drone he launched carried units of blood that were successfully delivered to KABGAYI Hospital within 5 minutes. It would normally have taken more than 30 minutes using the vehicle system.

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AfSBT is making a Positive Difference to National Blood Programmes in Africa

Upcoming events



ASLM congress: <http://aslm2016.org/>

The third biennial international conference of the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) will convene in Cape Town, South Africa from 3-8 December 2016.

IPFA: <http://www.ipfa.nl/events/ipfa-asia-pacific-workshop-on-plasma-quality-and-supply-yogyakarta-indonesia-march-2017>: Technological, regulatory and organizational tools to produce plasma for fractionation:
2-3 March 2017, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

IPFA/PEI 24th International Workshop on "Surveillance and Screening of Blood-borne Pathogens" 16-17 May 2017, Zagreb, Croatia: <http://www.ipfa.nl/events/ipfa-pei-24-international-workshop-zagreb>

IPFA/BCA 3rd Global Symposium on The Future for Blood and Plasma Donations, 11-12 September 2017, Atlanta, GA, USA: <http://www.ipfa.nl/events/ipfa-bca-3-global-symposium-on-the-future-for-blood-and-plasma-donations-2017-usa>

ISBT: 27th Regional Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark: 17-21 June 2017: <http://www.isbtweb.org/copenhagen/>

ISBT: 28th Regional Congress in Guangzhou, China: 25-28 November 2017

****Check the AfSBT website, at www.afsbt.org for more news items and alerts****

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https://www.facebook.com/afsbt/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

Why not go to Facebook to access photos and news of other blood services in Africa? All you need to do, in the Facebook search screen, is to type in the name of the country, followed by the words blood service. There is a wealth of information to be found.

However long the night, the dawn will break ~ African proverb

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