



Africa Sanguine

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Beryl Armstrong

Cancellation of Abidjan Congress

I regret to inform you that the Executive Committee of the Africa Society for Blood Transfusion has decided that it will be prudent to cancel the Afsbt Congress planned to take place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from 26 to 29 September 2011. The decision was on the advice of the local Congress Organising Committee, chaired by Dr Séidou Konaté. We apologise for the inconvenience that this may cause, but we believe that the ongoing insecurity in the country leaves us no choice.

Annulation du Congrès d'Abidjan

Je regrette de vous informer que le Comité exécutif de la Société Africaine de Transfusion Sanguine a décidé qu'il serait prudent d'annuler le Congrès de la SATS qui devrait avoir lieu à Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire du 26-29 Septembre 2011. La décision a été prise sur le conseil du comité local d'organisation du Congrès, présidé par le Dr Konaté Séidou. Nous nous excusons pour les désagréments que cela peut causer, mais nous croyons que l'insécurité persistante dans le pays ne nous laisse pas le choix.

World Blood Donor Day

This issue of the journal carries an account from Malawi, describing their Blood Donation Awareness Week. By the time this journal reaches you, we will again have celebrated World Blood Donor Day on 14 June. You are invited to send your stories to us, to publish in the December issue of the journal.

Step-Wise Accreditation

Progress continues to be made by the Afsbt group writing the Standards and related documents together with the AABB team. This is a very large and long term project. Once the documentation is complete and the Task Team and Advisory Group have been consulted, we will be able to move on and begin to plan for testing the system. A more detailed account of activities is given in this issue.

Education and training

The exciting news with regard to the Education and Training project is that an Afsbt Education Committee has been formed to continue the activities of the working groups that laid the groundwork after the Afsbt Congress in Nairobi in 2009. See the account of what has been happening, in this issue.

Website

If you have not already done so, you are encouraged to visit our website at www.afsbt.org and admire the changes that have been made. Soon there will be a members-only section and you will be able to sign in to see your electronic version of the journal. The British Blood Transfusion Society has also very kindly given paid-up Afsbt members access to their newsletter, Bloodlines. The Princess of Wales award winner, Bekele Tiruwork from Ethiopia, contributed to the November 2010 issue of this newsletter.

ISO certification

Congratulations to Eritrea on their achievement. Read about this in the journal. It is very encouraging to see how blood services are striving to improve quality. Quality goes hand in hand with blood safety and the more we focus on improving the standard of the way in which we go about our work, the better the service we provide to patients requiring blood transfusions.

Blood programmes in sub-Saharan Africa

This issue provides an overview of this important subject, over the last decade. There has been considerable improvement in the development and performance of national blood programmes in Africa. We know that blood safety is able to limit the spread of blood borne infections. Blood programmes need to be regularly reviewed and for sustainability, an ongoing coordinated effort involving national health authorities and resource partners is essential.