**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**Pre-donation counseling**

**Notes to those adapting this to conform to local guidelines**

Pre-donation counselling forms part of the process of donor selection in which the prospective donor’s suitability to donate is assessed against a set of criteria related to their medical history. The donor selection process is more effective if relevant information and counselling are provided to prospective donors, enabling them to self-defer if they recognize that their blood would not be suitable for transfusion.

Prospective donors may be deferred, either on a temporary or permanent basis, on the grounds of their health status, medical or travel history, or risk of transmitting an infection to the recipient. Pre-donation counselling is important for prospective donors who are temporarily or permanently deferred from donation, as it provides them with the reasons for deferral, and information on further testing, or treatment if appropriate. Prospective donors who are temporarily deferred should be encouraged to return.

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

1. **Introduction**

While blood donation is a lifesaving activity, under some circumstances it may be a source of harm to blood recipients and to blood donors. There are safeguards in transfusion medicine to limit the likelihood of getting harmed from blood donation or transfusion, one of which is the pre-donation counselling process. This is an opportunity to explain to the blood donor about the donation process, the value of honest responses and the benefit of blood donation.

The *Africa Society for Blood Transfusion Step-Wise Accreditation Standards* requires that “Donors shall be informed about the blood donation procedure, potential adverse reactions and post-donation care, the tests carried out on the donated blood, the process for notification of abnormal results, and information that may be released to a third party.”

This procedure describes the steps to be followed when conducting pre-donation counselling.

1. **Purpose and Scope**

This procedure is to be used by authorised staff involved in blood donor selection when providing donors with information in regard to blood donation in order to ensure the safety of both the blood donor and the recipient**.**

1. **Acronyms and Definitions**
   1. Nil.
2. **Materials and equipment required**
   1. Nil.
3. **Safety**
   1. There are no significant safety concerns associated with this procedure.
4. **Responsible**
   1. Authorised personnel who are involved in blood donor counselling are responsible for all activities described in this procedure.
5. **Procedure**

**General Counselling – All donors**

* 1. Verify the identification of the donor and ensure that you have the correct Medical History Form.
  2. Review the donor information part of the Medical History Form with the donor.
  3. Assure the donor that his/her information will be kept confidential.
  4. Discuss with the donor risk behavior for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
  5. Explain to the donor the consequences of not being honest when answering the questions.
  6. Encourage feedback and questions from the blood donor.
  7. Explain to the donor the quantity of blood to be drawn, tests to be carried out the donated blood and inform him/her that he/she will be notified of the results if any of the results are irregular..
  8. Make sure the donor understands the information that you have shared.
  9. Inform the donor about the importance of self-exclusion from the donation process if he/she believes his/her blood is not suitable for transfusion.
  10. Discourage blood donation in order to obtain tests results.
  11. Review the questionnaire with the donor and ask further questions where the responses are not clear.
  12. Ask the donor if they have had all their questions adequately answered.
  13. Explain to the donor the need for obtaining consent for the blood donation.
  14. Explain to the donor the medical examinations to be performed.
  15. Thank the donor for taking the time to donate.

**Counselling donors who are to be deferred from donating at this time**

* 1. Explain to the donor the reason for the deferral and the length of time for which the deferral is effective.
  2. If the reason for the deferral is such that the donor should seek further medical advice, explain this to the donor.
  3. Address any questions that the donor may have.
  4. Confirm that the donor has understood your explanation.
  5. If the deferral is of a temporary nature, encourage the donor to return for donation when the deferral period has elapsed.
  6. If the deferral is permanent, ensure that the donor has understood that they should NEVER present for blood donation at any venue in the future.
  7. Record the date and time of the counselling on the Medical History Form.

1. **Records and forms**
   1. The Medical History Form must be retained in compliance with the Document Retention Policy.
2. **References**
   1. Blood donor counselling: implementation guidelines. WHO (2014)
3. **Revision Summary**

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| **REVISION NUMBER** | **DATE** | **REVISION DETAILS** | **REASON FOR REVISION** |
| 1 |  | None. First version. |  |