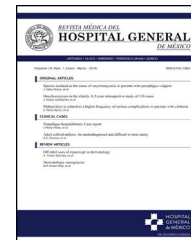




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EDITORIAL

The National Center of Blood Transfusion

El Centro Nacional de la Transfusión Sanguínea



The National Center of Blood Transfusion (NCBT) is a decentralized agency under the Ministry of Health whose mission is to consolidate and maintain a national system that allows availability, accessibility, quality and the safety of blood, blood components and stem cells for therapeutic purposes, all this in accordance with a legal framework, effective operating strategies and policies, with the purpose of promoting the health of the donor and the recipient. The NCBT is viewed as the specialized governing body that establishes the policies and strategies that guarantee that the therapeutic use of blood, blood components and stem cells is carried out in accordance with the highest quality standards, achieving a consistent and timely availability, in accordance with that which is set forth on an updated legal framework and based on scientific and technological advances, as well as on the needs of the country.^{1,2}

The mission and vision are achieved by adhering to the functions described in Article 42 of the Internal Rules of the Ministry of Health, with its principal concept being:

- The formulation and evaluation of national policies and strategies in the subject of transfusion medicine, with the continued transformation and creation of standards for strict national compliance.
- The technical support to the National Health Service through the National Network of State Centers of Blood Transfusion.
- The promotion and supervision of voluntary blood donation drives.
- The implementation of procedures that facilitate the collection of blood, blood components and haematopoietic stem cells.
- The contribution of scientific research as part of the cross-cutting strategies of the Specific Action Program (2013–2018); the NCBT contributes with the development of highly specialized research in cellular therapy, regenerative medicine and transfusion medicine, and regarding actions aimed at making blood and its components available, in collaboration and coordination with the

competent authorities, establishing strategic alliances at both the national and international level, that promote scientific, technical and standards exchange.^{3–6}

- The consolidation of the National Regional System of Blood Services, which strengthens actions taken respect to quality, with the continued implementation of the Quality Control Program, the establishment of a sustainable legal framework and the establishment, evaluation and control of the National System of Biovigilance.

The international policies of the World Health Organisation⁷ and the Pan American Health Organization⁸ with regard to blood safety urge us to ensure monitoring and compliance due to their importance in substituting the blood replacement scheme with that of voluntary, altruistic and repeat donations in order to generate a safer scheme for transfusion medicine under the following recommendations:

- Inviting involved countries to reach 100% of voluntary donations, seeking innovative ways to encourage the participation of the youth and the community and to develop national blood donation programs that increase the number of voluntary donors;
- Gradually replacing donations by immediate and extended family members, and eliminating remunerated blood donation;
- Requesting countries that have already reached 100% voluntary donation to intensify their efforts to increase the number of regular donors for the purpose of maintaining a stable donor population to meet national requirements for blood and blood components at all times, both under normal conditions as well as in emergency situations;
- Urging countries that are creating or expanding blood component supply programs to base them on 100% voluntary and non-remunerated donation;
- Encouraging countries that have developed mechanisms for the acquisition of blood products to cooperate with other countries to guarantee sufficient supplies of blood products based on voluntary donation.

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In accordance with these specific international lines of action, the coordinated response from the NCBT has been the technical cooperation with the national blood programs of Mexico as well as those in the Region of the Americas, which has statistically contributed in ensuring the timely and sufficient quantity of safe blood for all patients needing transfusions and impacting the reduction in mortality.

The NCBT is therefore the governing body responsible for setting the rules for the donation, collection, processing and storage of blood and its components, as well as for its efficient, timely, and safe distribution and its clinical use, including haematopoietic stem cells; the operating role falls on a network of blood services under Government supervision.

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