OP 45. Therapeutic phlebotomy and blood donation in patients with hereditary haemochromatosis and erythrocytosis: A 15-year review in the Western Cape Region of South Africa

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Background/Objectives
A survey published in 2013 confirmed that policies with respect to blood donors with Hereditary Haemochromatosis (HH) were very variable. Our service has accepted therapeutic donations for clinical use since the early 90's, the objective of this study is to confirm that such donations do not present a threat to the safety of the recipients of these units.

Materials and Methods
A retrospective observational study was performed analysing patients/donors attending therapeutic donor clinics from 1st January 2000 to 31st December 2014. The majority of the donors attending have HH; patients with secondary erythrocytosis and polycythaemia vera (PV)) are also venesected. However, donations from patients with PV and erythrocytosis secondary to high affinity haemoglobin variants are discarded. At each donation the donor/patients complete the confidential donor questionnaire and all donations are screened for transfusion transmitted diseases (TTD's), namely HIV, HBV, HCV and syphilis.

Results: During the review period 1132 patients/donors donated 17699 units of whole blood. The majority had an underlying diagnosis of HH and 62% were genotyped for C282Y, H63D and S65C mutations. Of the donated units, 12030 (68%) were accepted for clinical use. TTD marker prevalence for the therapeutic donations was not significantly higher than in the general donor population. No reports of adverse reactions attributable to the transfusion of the therapeutic donations were reported to the blood banks.

Conclusion
This study confirms that transfusion of blood donated for therapeutic purposes is safe to transfuse, despite the donors not falling within the strict definition of altruistic volunteer donors.

(The operations of the therapeutic venesection program at WPBTS were presented by poster at the AfSBT Congress in July/Aug 2014, and also at the 32nd SA National Blood Transfusion Congress in October 2013. These past poster presentations did not include the blood safety data presented above).