

Developments of the Blood Service in Kazakhstan

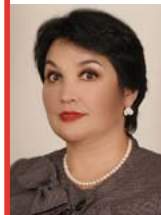
During the autumn of this year, we are celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the establishment of the Blood Supply System in Kazakhstan. Therefore, a scientific conference 'Actual problems and prospects of development of the Blood Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan', was held on September 10-11 in Almaty.

The conference was attended by various Blood Service representatives from all the Commonwealth of Independent State (CIS) countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan together with several international organizations in the field of Medicine. The current Blood Service practices of the republic, its problems, achievements and developments, production and clinical transfusion were discussed. In addition, in honor of this anniversary, veterans of the Blood Service of Kazakhstan were rewarded for their personal contributions by government awards. Dr. Zhandos Burkitbayev, director of the Republican Scientific and Production Center of Transfusion, presented the main points for improvement, the actual problems and developments. In a relatively short period of time, Blood Service of Kazakhstan have been successfully improved by implementation of international standards, bringing the Blood Service in accordance with international good practices. These concepts of Blood Service for 2011-2015 were approved by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Firstly, 206 different small (urban) blood centres were reorganized into regional branches and preparation of blood at the district hospitals was terminated. To date, the Blood Services of Kazakhstan - a holistic, centralized structure- is represented by 14 regional

Blood Centres in Almaty and Astana. Also, other urban and well-equipped blood centres, which are based in Almaty and Semipalatinsk, met all the requirements for laboratory testing of donor blood in accordance with the International standards. This provided blood components with high quality. Secondly, one of the most important stages was to improve the relevant legal framework. Therefore, for the period 2011-2012, legal and regulatory framework was updated and reviewed. Moreover, new standards for laboratory diagnosis of blood were implemented leading to quality control and clinical use of blood components. Kazakhstan was the only one of the CIS countries to ensure transfusion safety at the state level legislation. This led to a two-stage screening method (immunofluorescence assay + PCR), which was validated and certified for the Blood Services. From January 1 2013 on, the adopted National Standards became mandatory.

The Research and Production Centre of Transfusion (RP T) implemented knowledge transfer and gained experience in leading international training organizations and blood centres. In addition, the RP T trained the various specialists of the Blood Service. By addressing the issues of the external evaluations, the Blood Service of Kazakhstan operated successfully because it recently established a RP T Republican



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Reference Laboratory (in August 2014), which was accredited with the National accreditation standard ISO 15189.

In addition, the conference featured presentations by Prof. Eugene Zhiburt (Russia) on the management of patients' blood. Also, the National Medical Centre of Surgery named after Prof. N.I. Pirogov, presented the new paradigm: implementation of patients' blood, based on improvements of clinical interface, sufficient evidence and patient-centred clinical practices, relevant standards and regulations to reduce the risks and costs. Furthermore, several statements were presented by international organizations including the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American International Health Alliance (AIHA) the main directions of their activities in Central Asia in order to ensure the safety of blood.

The AIHA, in collaboration with the CDC, is involved in a new five-year project to provide technical assistance to the countries of Central Asia, to further improve Blood Transfusion practices, including effective strategies to attract voluntary unpaid blood donors and screening of all donated blood for transfusion-transmitted infections. Moreover, during the conference, various reports on the reform experiences of the Blood Service of the Republic of Lithuania were discussed. Colleagues from Belgium and Russia presented modern technology for procurement of blood components. Successful experiences in the development of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation were shared by colleagues from the USA, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan.

Finally, the 'Association of transfusionists of Kazakhstan' was created, which main objective is to further successfully develop Transfusion Medicine.