Motivation and Incentives to Blood Donation in Saudi Arabia

Abdel Galil M. Abdel Gader, MD, PhD, FRCP
The Blood Donor Centre,
King Khalid University Hospital
Riyadh 11461, Saudi Arabia

Background and Objectives:
The blood donor system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia depends on a combination of voluntary and involuntary donors. The aim of this study is to explore the attitudes, beliefs and motivations of Saudis towards blood donation.

Materials and Methods:
A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 1511 Saudis

Results:
99% of the respondents showed positive attitude towards blood donations and its importance for patients care.

Blood donors: 91% agree that that blood donation is a religious obligation, 63% will accept a token gift, 34% do not object to donating six times/year and 67% did not mind coming themselves to the donor center to give blood.

Non-donors: 46% were not asked to give blood and those who were asked mentioned fear (5%) and lack of time (16%) as their main deterrents. Reasons for rejection as donors include under-weight and age (71%) and health reasons (19%). 75% objected to money compensation but 69% will accept token gifts and 92% will donate if a relative/friend needs blood.

For both donors and non-donors: 88.5% believed that blood donation is not harmful; 20% would refuse blood transfusion because of the risk acquiring infectious disease; 85.5% preferred direct donation

Conclusion:
These results reflect an encouraging strong positive attitude towards blood donation. Further future planning with emphasis on educational/publicity programs and careful organization of donor recruitment campaigns could see the dream of total voluntary non-remunerated blood donations should not take long to be true.

Key words: Saudi blood donors, attitude to blood donation, donor motivation, donor compensation.

One sentence summary:
Saudi blood donors and non-donors show strong positive attitude towards blood donation, with an overwhelming objection to money compensation.