

A Toolkit to Establish and Run Hospital Transfusion Committees

Introduction

This toolkit is designed to support the establishment and effective functioning of a Hospital Transfusion Committee (HTC) and was informed by cross-country learning webinar and key informant interviews conducted. The hospital transfusion committee plays a critical role in ensuring the safety and efficacy of blood transfusion practices within healthcare settings.

This toolkit provides job aids for developing and/or reactivating Hospital Transfusion Committees (HTCs) to help hospitals understand their importance and facilitate their functioning. It will provide hospitals looking to establish HTCs with guidance. For hospitals that have HTCs in place, this toolkit will provide ways to utilize them to ensure they are achieving the goal of improving blood utilization.

This toolkit outlines the purpose, benefits, and guidelines of Hospital Transfusion Committees. It also includes suggestions for agendas, for example, Terms of Reference and the roles and responsibilities of key actors.

1. Committee Structure and Roles

1.1. Membership

When choosing membership for the HTC, the following are suggestions and may or may not be included in the membership of your hospital's needs.

- **Composition:** Include representatives from various disciplines, such as:
 - Hematology/Transfusion Medicine
 - Nursing
 - Pharmacy
 - Quality Assurance
 - Medical director of the blood establishment
 - Clinical director of the hospital
 - Physicians from disciplines that transfuses a lot (e.g., surgery)
 - Infectious Disease
 - Administration

1.2. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Chairperson:** Leads meetings, sets agendas, and meets committee goals.
- **Secretary:** Documents meeting minutes and coordinates communication.
- **Members:** Participate actively in discussions, contribute expertise, and implement recommendations.

1.3 Terms of Reference

This tool can be used when setting up a Transfusion Committee's Terms of Reference. These are suggestions and a guide and do not all have to be included in the HTC Terms of Reference. The purpose of the HTC can be to help define blood transfusion policies to the local hospital activities, ensure that regular evaluations of blood transfusion practices are conducted, and set criteria for ordering practices and usage.

Items that may be included:

- Version date
- Mission/purpose
- Reports to
- Documentation and/or minutes
- Name of hospital
- Scope
- Electing a chair (duties, obligations)
- Number of meetings per year
- Decision-making process

To follow are general items that can be included in the terms of reference.

Functions and duties of hospital transfusion committees:

Monitoring and reviewing

- Monitor, review and define blood transfusion policies and procedures, clinical practice guidelines related to safe and effective use of blood products
- Review blood bank reports
- Monitor and review utilization patterns of blood products
- Review ratio of cross-matched blood to transfused units
- Monitor blood product record keeping for traceability
- Document and review post-transfusion infections and any serious adverse reaction to blood and blood products

Education

- Assist in patient education
- Promote continuing education in transfusion practices to hospital staff

Quality assurance

- Maintain a manual of blood transfusion practices
- Develop audit criteria
- Conduct evaluations of blood transfusion practices
- Maintain records of transfusion, including accurate patient information
- Report to proper regulatory agencies

Liaison

- Serve as liaison between laboratory, nursing, and other hospital staff and Blood Transfusion Service

2. Meeting Guidelines

2.1. Frequency and Duration

- **Frequency:** Monthly or quarterly meetings, depending on hospital needs.
- **Duration:** 1-2 hours.

2.2. Agenda

This summary agenda can be used as a reference and as a tool when developing an agenda.

- Review of previous meeting minutes, purpose, and specific objectives clearly defined.
- Create and distribute an opportunity to add agenda items, prepare and present data, and make decisions
- Label each agenda item 'action' or 'information'

- Updates on transfusion practices and protocols and use to show compliance with standards
- Discussion of adverse events or incidents.
- Review of blood usage statistics.
- Education and training needs.
- Development of new policies or guidelines.

2.3. Documentation

- Maintain records of minutes, decisions, and action items.
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3. Key Functions of the HTC

3.1. Policy Development

- Create and review blood transfusion policies and guidelines.
- Ensure alignment with national and international standards.

3.2. Education and Training

- Develop training programs for staff on safe transfusion practices.
- Organize workshops and seminars on hemovigilance and adverse event reporting.

3.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Track and analyze transfusion-related data, including:
 - Blood product utilization
 - Adverse events
 - Transfusion complications
- Regularly review audit results and implement improvements.

3.4. Adverse Event Management

- Establish a reporting system for adverse events and near misses.
 - Investigate incidents and implement corrective actions.
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4. Quality Improvement Initiatives

4.1. Audits and Assessments

- Conduct regular audits of transfusion practices and compliance with policies.
- Assess the effectiveness of training programs and interventions.

4.2. Benchmarking

- Compare local practices against national benchmarks to identify areas for improvement.

4.3. Feedback Mechanisms

- Create channels for feedback from staff involved in blood transfusion processes.
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5. Collaboration and Communication

5.1. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- Foster relationships with other committees (e.g., Infection Control, Pharmacy) to promote patient safety.

5.2. Stakeholder Engagement

- Involve hospital administration and stakeholders in the decision-making process.

5.3. Public Awareness

- Develop communication strategies to inform patients and the community about blood safety and transfusion practices.
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6. Resources and References

6.1. Essential Resources

- Access to guidelines from organizations such as:
 - World Health Organization (WHO)
 - American Association of Blood Banks (AABB)
 - National Health Service Blood and Transplant (NHSBT)

6.2. Reference Materials

- Maintain a library of current literature, guidelines, and educational materials relevant to blood transfusion practices.
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Conclusion

This toolkit is a comprehensive guide for establishing and maintaining an effective Hospital Transfusion Committee. By implementing these strategies, hospitals can enhance blood transfusion practices' safety, efficacy, and quality, ultimately improving patient outcomes.

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