

Finding blood in metropolis: The smart solution

Muhammad Shaheryar Haider, Muhammad Ali Khan

It is a common observation in hospitals across Pakistan, especially large government run hospitals, that many at times when doctors ask attendants of a patient to arrange blood, the attendants despite having resources are unable to do so. They usually return after exhaustive struggle, with a similar story that the particular blood group is not available in any near-by blood bank and they don't know what to do. One particular study explores different barriers to timely and safe blood transfusion and highlights the importance of direct communication between hospitals and blood banks in timely blood arrangement.¹ Finding a rare blood group is an even more difficult task, and in a city like Karachi, with hundreds of blood banks not integrated with each other, attendants usually have no clue where to start their search from. One particular group of people, most affected by this situation, are the ones coming from rural parts of country, to seek treatment in large public health centres in cities. One can only imagine the challenge they go through to find blood for their loved ones in a city unknown to them.

With the rapid induction of technology in medical sciences, the best way we suggest is to develop a web based platform or a mobile application to solve this issue. This can be either a government backed effort or a private initiative. The high standards maintained by blood banks such as AKU blood bank, PWA blood bank, Hussaini blood bank and Fatimid blood bank to name a few, gives us

Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, Karachi, Pakistan

Correspondence: Muhammad Shaheryar Haider.
e-mail: shaheryarhaider@hotmail.com

hope that an integrated system between these banks can update both doctors and attendants about where to look for a particular blood group. Aminur Rehman et al in their study concluded that digitalized blood bank information system can prove successful in reducing the time between a doctor's advice to collect blood and safe transfusion.² Studies in other countries have also shown usefulness of technology in the blood management chain. So, if a system which can bring together 5 to 6 most renowned blood banks and provide update even every 24 hours about which branch of a particular bank has the required type of blood, it will not only decrease the delays in blood transfusion, but will also reduce both mental and economic stress on attendants. Any person with knowledge of using computers and mobiles can search using this system, and guide others, especially people from rural backgrounds. If implemented, it can decrease the time delay to treatment and hospital stay of a patient leading to improve efficiency of health care institutions.

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References

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