

# NATIONAL COMPARATIVE AUDIT OF BLOOD TRANSFUSION

Keys to Success in Improving Blood Transfusion through Clinical Audit  
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## Introduction

In collaboration with medical Royal colleges, medical societies and associations, audits have been carried out in the use of red blood cells in primary, elective, unilateral total hip replacement, the administration of blood overnight, the use of fresh, frozen plasma and the practice of healthcare professionals administering blood. Audits are designed in collaboration with the Clinical Effectiveness department of the Royal College of Physicians, London.

### 1st Key to success – Make it easy to take part

All our audits are conducted using a web-based audit tool. Tools are available 24/7. It's easy to sign up: hospitals write to us, email us or phone us. A hospital phoning us to take part in an audit can be on the system and entering data within 6 minutes of first contacting us! And this year we're introducing online registration.

### 2nd Key to success – Make it relevant

If an audit is relevant to current practice, hospitals will be interested. Our Bedside Transfusion Audits focus only on the details needed to see if patients are being identified and monitored correctly. The question set is quick to use, fit for purpose and relevant. Before audits are launched they are trialled in hospitals so we know they work and are based on today's practice, taking account of technology where it's in use and where it's not.

### 3rd Key to success – Report quickly

Hospitals don't want to wait months to get the results, they need it in weeks. Before an audit is launched it must be piloted, and part of that process is finding out if you can get the data you want and how you can use it. So, when you launch an audit, you know from the outset what information you're going to get and how to handle it. Part way through the audit take a sample of data and use to write a draft report. When data collection closes you will be able to analyse and report it quickly.

### 4th Key to success – Don't publish railway timetables

Of course your audit data is interesting, but present it in a format and sequence that makes sense to the intended reader – and remember there may be more than one audience. Keep the clinically relevant stuff up front and relegate the demographics to the appendices – people will look for it if they want it, but they won't plough through pages and pages in search of the key findings.

### 5th Key to success – Use findings to influence change

If your audits are seen to have the ability to influence change, then more people will take part. Recommendations from our audits of Bedside Transfusion Practice have been reflected in *Safer Practice Notice 14* issued by the National Patient Safety Agency. We have influenced work on the updating of blood administration guidelines issued by the *British Committee for Standards in Haematology*. Our findings have influenced debate: Significant numbers of patients are going for surgery without having optimal haemoglobin, even though hospitals have a mechanism to do this; Some patients are being over-transfused or unnecessarily transfused; some patients are transfused without wearing a form of identification, and are not monitored during that transfusion.

### Key to successes

Over 80% of NHS hospitals take part in our audits; There is a downward trend in serious bedside transfusion errors; There is a 50% reduction in the amount of blood used for hip replacement surgery.

## Want to know more?

To find out more about the National Comparative Audit of Blood Transfusion programme, contact John Grant-Casey on 01865 440046 or email [john.grant-casey@nhsbt.nhs.uk](mailto:john.grant-casey@nhsbt.nhs.uk)

