HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
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Evolving Trends in Transfusion Medicine
Scientific Symposium • 8 - 9 July 2006

HSA CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF MILESTONES IN BLOOD BANKING

Singapore, 8 July 2006 – **The Centre for Transfusion Medicine [CTM]** of the **Health Sciences Authority [HSA]** is organising a scientific symposium this weekend from 8 to 9 July 2006 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the National Blood Programme in Singapore.

Held at the Matrix@Biopolis, more than 300 delegates from 16 countries are attending the 2-day symposium featuring 20 international and regional experts in the field of transfusion medicine.

The symposium theme "Evolving Trends in Transfusion Medicine" focuses not only on the present state of art of transfusion medicine but on the trends and developments that will shape transfusion medicine and blood banking in the future.

"*Transfusion medicine is a tremendously diverse field that combines clinical practice, scientific research and technology, public health and social science. In our rapidly changing environment, sharing of knowledge, ideas and experiences becomes crucial*" said Dr Diana Teo, Director of HSA's CTM who is also the Chairman of the Organising Committee for the symposium.

In her opening address**,** Ms Yong Ying-I, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health commended CTM for its "*first class centre of excellence in transfusion medicine, with a reputation for quality*" in its achievement of the AABB accreditation in May 2006. She also emphasised the importance of "*a first-rate national blood service with a safe and stable blood supply and high quality blood banking services to support healthcare development*" in Singapore.

Keynote address speaker, Dr Ong Yong Wan, who is the former Medical Director of the then Singapore Blood Transfusion Service, described the blood programme in Singapore as a huge "Tree of Life" with strong roots. She also spoke about the significance of its 60th anniversary in view that "*modern blood transfusion itself has a relatively short history of just over a hundred years*".

A commemorative video chronicling the 60 years of milestones and achievements in Singapore's blood banking history was specially produced and shown at the symposium opening.

Other symposium highlights include 3 workshops on **"**Risk Management In Blood Services", "Blood Donor Management" and a "Practical Workshop On Red Cell Testing".

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Annex A

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
MEDIA INFOSHEET

An overview of 60 years of milestones in blood banking

2006 marks the 60th anniversary of the National Blood Programme in Singapore. From a fledgling blood bank in 1946 collecting less than 300 units of whole blood a year, we have grown to a comprehensive national blood service that collected over 83,000 units of whole blood. We are now providing more than 150,000 units of blood products a year to meet our nation's needs.

Over the past 60 years, our national blood service has been a cornerstone in the development of health services in Singapore, providing blood to those who need it and ensuring an adequate and safe blood supply for daily use and in emergencies.

LOOKING BACK AT OUR MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1946	The national blood service started off as a civilian service at the Singapore General Hospital. Named as the Singapore Blood Transfusion Service [SBTS], it collected blood to supply the needs of our hospitals then.
1949	The first mobile blood drive was introduced to encourage blood donations in residential areas and at workplaces.
1953	The blood service moved into its first permanent premises in 1953, sharing a building with the Singapore General Hospital Accident & Emergency Unit.
1965	Plastic blood collection bags replaced initial glass bottles to allow each blood donation to be separated into different blood components.
1966	Blood requests processing for patients were decentralised and crossmatch laboratories were set up in individual hospitals to meet increasing blood requests.
1967	A fully equipped self-contained Mobile Blood Bank was donated by the Rotary Club for blood collection sessions in the city area.
1973	All donated blood were tested for Hepatitis B, resulting in significantly reduced risks of transfusion-transmitted hepatitis B.
1979	With the establishment of the Frozen Red Cell Programme, Singapore became one of the few countries in the region where patients with rare blood types have access to available blood for transfusion.

1979 (con't)	The apheresis programme was started with two early cell separator machines. Today, the apheresis programme collects more than 5,000 units of single donor platelets and plasma, meeting nearly half of the national requirements. The therapeutic apheresis programme provides life-saving plasma exchange procedures for critically ill patients with autoimmune diseases.
1981	With the advent of automation in testing systems, the new automatic blood grouping system enabled the blood service to handle as much as 240 samples per hour, a quantum leap from the old manual methods of testing.
1983	Autologous blood transfusion was introduced to provide patients going for planned surgery an option to be transfused with their own blood.
1985	The blood service recognised the serious risk of HIV-contamination in the blood supply. Strict donor criteria and pre-donation screening were introduced to reduce the risk of HIV-infected persons donating blood. HIV testing was introduced for all blood donations.
1986	As Information Technology began to take momentum, the blood service took early steps to improve the efficiency of its operations and introduced a blood bank computer system to manage blood donors. IT continued to be used in all critical activities, from blood donor screening to collection, testing and distributing of blood.
1988	The blood service moved into its new home at the National Blood Centre. The new building provided spacious and comfortable facilities for our blood donors.
1989	Tissue typing laboratory was initially set up to support the developing kidney and bone marrow transplant programmes. Today, this transplant support laboratory provides a comprehensive 24-hour-on-call tissue typing service for kidney, bone marrow, liver and heart transplant programmes both locally and overseas.
1990	Hospital Transfusion Committees were set up in all hospitals to work closely with the blood service to promote good transfusion practices in their hospitals.
1992	Testing for Hepatitis C was introduced for all donated blood to improve the safety of the national blood supply. In recognition of its high standards and quality, the Singapore Blood Transfusion Service was appointed a World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre for Transfusion Medicine for the Western Pacific Region.
2000	Nucleic acid amplification test [NAT], a newly developed and more advanced method of testing for infectious diseases was introduced in 2000 for HIV and Hepatitis C and in 2005 for Hepatitis B.
2001	The SBTS was renamed the Centre for Transfusion Medicine [CTM] when it became part of the newly formed Health Sciences Authority and its blood donation suite became known as Bloodbank@HSA.

2001 (con't)	A new partnership was forged with the Singapore Red Cross which was formally appointed as the National Blood Donor Recruiter. The success of this unique strategic partnership has generated interest from countries seeking to improve their national blood programmes.
2003	A national haemovigilance programme that was set up in collaboration with Hospital Transfusion Committees, has resulted in improved transfusion safety at hospitals DonorCare@HSA, an internet portal was launched for donors to make online appointments for blood donations.
2005	With the introduction of malaria testing, donors who were previously barred from donating blood, can now donate blood and their red cells are used for transfusion.
2006	Bacterial testing was introduced for platelets to reduce the risk of bacterial contamination for patients receiving the products. CTM became first national blood service in Asia to be accredited by AABB. Achieving this benchmark is a clear recognition of the international standards of quality and safety that CTM has achieved.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE

The accreditation by the AABB this year is a fitting culmination of the 60 good years of building our blood service to international standards of quality and safety.

2006 also charts the beginning of a new phase in our history, aligned to our new vision in the Health Sciences Authority to be the leading innovative authority, protecting and advancing national health and safety. We look forward to a future that beckons excitingly with the promise of new challenges and opportunities.

We will continue to provide our nation with a blood supply that is of the highest standard of quality and safety, and our national blood service as a centre of excellence in transfusion medicine worldwide.

New discoveries will expand the boundaries of our knowledge and technology, changing our environment and our practices. Paradigm shifts in transfusion medicine will test our ability to adapt and meet changes. We will harness these new developments to continue our advancement towards the highest standards of quality and safety for our blood supply, as well as our professional and technical excellence in transfusion medicine.

Annex B

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MEDIA INFOSHEET

HSA ACHIEVES AABB ACCREDITATION IN BLOOD BANKING

HSA's Centre for Transfusion Medicine [CTM] has become the first national blood service in Asia to be AABB accredited.

2 The AABB has granted CTM accreditation for two years* in Donor Centre Activities and Transfusion Activities.

**till 30 March 2008*

3 Accreditation follows an intensive on-site assessment in March this year by specially trained AABB assessors who established that the level of medical, technical and administrative performance within CTM meets or exceeds the standards set by AABB. By successfully meeting those requirements, CTM joins approximately 1,800 similar facilities across the United States and abroad that have earned AABB accreditation.

4. Though AABB's Accreditation procedures are voluntary, CTM has sought AABB Accreditation because this programme assists facilities around the world in achieving excellence by promoting a level of professional and medical expertise that contributes to quality performance.

5. AABB is a leading international non-profit organisation dedicated to advancing transfusion medicine and related biological therapies. AABB Accreditation for blood banking, transfusion medicine, blood management and cellular therapies is the designation of choice worldwide as it demonstrates a blood bank's commitment to advanced learning, continuous improvement and innovation by striving to sustain the highest possible levels of patient and donor care. AABB-accredited organisations are recognised by their peers as leaders in their field.

6. In his congratulatory letter to HSA, Dr Christopher D Hillyer, AABB President, says that CTM's quality and operational systems have been assessed and determined to meet or exceed the rigorous requirements set by AABB.

7. As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the National Blood Programme in Singapore this year, the AABB accreditation is a significant milestone that culminates years of hard work of putting into place world class quality systems for blood banking.

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About the Health Sciences Authority

At the Health Sciences Authority [HSA], we apply medical, pharmaceutical and specialised scientific expertise to safeguard public health and safety in Singapore. As one multidisciplinary agency, we serve as the national regulator of all therapeutic products by providing a seamless yet rigorous regulatory process to the healthcare and biomedical sciences industries. We also run the national blood bank, Bloodbank@HSA, protecting the integrity of the nation's blood supply. As the national reference agency, we exploit specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in order to serve the administration of justice and enhance safety in our community. For more details, visit: **www.hsa.gov.sg**

About the Centre for Transfusion Medicine

HSA's Centre for Transfusion Medicine [CTM], which operates the Bloodbank@HSA, is the national agency responsible for collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood and blood products to all hospitals in Singapore, both public and private.

As the national blood service, we provide specialised services in transfusion sciences such as immunohaematology and tissue typing. Our transfusion medicine specialists also provide professional advice and consultations to clinicians in Singapore and the region, so as to promote the best practices in clinical transfusion medicine and to ensure that every blood donation is optimally and safely used. For more details, visit www.hsa.gov.sg, select the "CTM" button.