


## Ahead to 100% of voluntary nonremunerated blood donation at a tertiary referral hospital blood bank in South India

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Sir,

Recruitment and retention of new blood donor is an important task for blood banks for self-sufficient of blood and blood products. Availability of blood and blood products has been a universal problem for a long time. Blood is a scarce resource and it is the responsibility of Blood Banks to ensure that blood supply is safe, adequate, and available to meet needs of our patient populations. Motivation, recruitment, and retention of voluntary blood donors are important criteria to achieve safe blood donation.<sup>[1]</sup> Voluntary nonremunerated blood donors are considered to be safest source.<sup>[2]</sup> Converting first-time donors to become regular donors continues to be a challenge for blood banks.<sup>[3]</sup> Indian blood donation system currently operates using bloods from both voluntary and replacement donors. Indian government has aimed to evacuate the replacement blood donors to achieve 100% voluntary nonremunerated blood donation due to safety concerns. Voluntary blood donors are continuously necessary for patients because the demand for donor blood is never ending. Over a million blood units are collected every year; and many more millions still need to be collected to meet the global demand and ensure sufficient and timely provision of blood.<sup>[4]</sup> Secret of successful blood donor recruitment is to take beds to the donors as close as possible on their convenient date and time rather than expecting donors to come to blood bank.<sup>[5]</sup>

Christian Medical College Hospital (CMCH), Vellore, is privileged to be in the service of the nation since 1900 by serving the poor, the marginalized, and the underprivileged people. The John Scudder Memorial Blood Bank in CMCH operates both voluntary and replacement principle. Over 24,000 samples of blood donors screen for infectious diseases last year at JSM blood bank. Currently, 30% of the blood bank supplies come from voluntary blood donations.

In the year 2000, the voluntary blood donors were about 5%. Because of the low flow of volunteers at JSM blood bank we decided to recruit more donors and promoting voluntary blood donations in and around Vellore region. We involved community as our target. In view of this, we gave many public awareness talks on general scenario about blood, the demand and need for safe blood, donor's criteria, and we gave option to donate at Blood Bank or blood donation drive. We motivated many young and energetic students and community workers to spread the joy of blood donation to community and motivate them to donate blood or to organize blood donation camps at their institutions and localities.

Result of this, we arranged blood donation camps in and around Vellore district and number of our blood donation drives had been increased steadily. We had recruited many young enthusiastic

blood donors at the camp site and they became repeated volunteers and ambassadors of our blood bank. We had conducted many blood donation camps in villages, religious ceremonies, local functions, and marriage receptions and utilized all available resources. Because of our efforts the number of blood donors had been significantly increased for last 7 year, rising at an average annual growth rate of 4–5%. Gradually we recruited new donors every year and in 2008, we had reached to about 30% of voluntary donors at our blood bank and we still recruit new donors through repeated blood donation drives to achieve 100% voluntary nonremunerated blood donation in John Scudder Memorial Blood Bank at near future.

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