


LETTER TO THE
EDITOR

Vox Sanguinis

Regarding International Forum on Hospital
Transfusion Services' Response to COVID-19

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Dear Editor,

We read with interest the International Forum recently published on Vox Sanguinis on the actions carried out from hospital transfusion services during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) [1]. The survey, to which 12 centres from around the world (included Italy) have joined, was structured on 9 questions assessing the changes in blood bank activities during COVID-19 pandemic and including various technical aspects from pre-transfusion testing to blood products storage and blood components utilization. Interestingly, the 9th question regarded the production of convalescent plasma (CP) [1]. The Italian participants answered that a number of protocols on CP are ongoing or planned in Italy and indicated as a reference the position paper of the Italian Society for Transfusion Medicine and Immunohematology (SIMTI) and the

Italian Society for Haemapheresis and Cell Manipulation (SIdEM). We would like to clarify that the Italian National Blood Center – Ministry of Health on March 12 has issued an operational nationwide mandatory protocol for donation of CP that has been also published recently in this Journal [2]. The aim of this protocol, adopted by all the Italian Blood Establishments (at the moment more than 60) planning to collect CP and providing homogeneous criteria for CP donation, collection, biological qualification and storage, is that of derogating from the currently in force donor selection criteria to permit to individuals recovered from COVID-19 to donate CP. Based on this institutional protocol, the academic hospital of Pavia and the city hospital of Mantova started a multicentre interventional single-arm trial (Clinicaltrials.gov: NCT04321421) [3], which consisted of collection of CP from donors through a cell separator device (every 600 ml plasmapheresis is divided into two 300 ml units, each of which is used to treat one patient) and the transfusion in critically ill COVID-19 patients. The trial has been recently completed, recruiting a total of 46 patients. At the time of writing, more than 300 CP donations have been performed at the two hospitals and more than 150 patients have been transfused in the frame of the experimental trial and as a compassionate use. Haemovigilance showed no safety concerns for both CP donors and recipients.

References

- 1 Lozano M, Yazer M, Jackson B, *et al.*: Vox Sanguinis International Forum on Hospital Transfusion Services' Response to COVID-19. *Vox Sang* 2020. [published online ahead of print, 2020 May 13]. <https://doi.org/10.1111/vox.12944>
- 2 Franchini M, Marano G, Velati C, *et al.*: Operational protocol for donation of anti-COVID-19 convalescent plasma in Italy. *Vox Sang* 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1111/vox.12940>
- 3 Perotti C, Del Fante C, Baldanti F, *et al.*: Plasma from donors recovered from the new Coronavirus 2019 as therapy for critical patients with COVID-19 (COVID-19 plasma study): a multicentre study protocol. *Intern Emerg Med* 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11739-020-02384-2>.

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