

## Answers for Newsletter Case Study Vol 4 Issue 1

### 1. What processes are in place for communication of the standards to personnel outside the blood transfusion laboratory?

When it comes to informing staff involved with transfusion medicine about current best practice standards, there are different avenues available. It is up to each facility to be aware of the standards and incorporate them into their communication process.

**Transfusion Medicine Committee:** Because regulations, guidelines and standards of practice are constantly evolving, there needs to be a forum where these changes are reviewed and presented to those who would be affected. Each step of the transfusion process including: storing, ordering and administering components; monitoring patients during and after the completion of transfusion and reporting of any adverse events should comply with the CSA standards, CSTM standards and in Ontario, the Ontario Laboratory Accreditation (OLA) requirements. Guidelines for appropriate use of blood products and blood components are available and under constant review. National Guidelines and Provincial Guidelines are available to help form policies for Transfusion Medicine. The Transfusion Medicine Committee is the epicentre for this type of review to take place and the most relevant group to recommend policies regarding transfusion medicine practices within their facility. The Transfusion Medicine Committee can also make recommendations around orientation and ongoing training for any staff handling and administering blood products and components.

**Transfusion Medicine Grand Rounds:** Most physicians are well acquainted with medical grand rounds, and having the opportunity to listen to the information that is presented at these events. Transfusion Medicine can be incorporated into such events when new guidelines are available, new policies are developed or revised, and new standards are published. Nurses, Physicians, Technologists and Perfusionists should be involved in these events, as transfusion medicine is not isolated to just the blood bank. The University of Toronto has recognized the need for transfusion medicine rounds and now offers their monthly Transfusion rounds to all Ontario hospitals via videoconference, to help provide education around best standards of practice to the transfusion medicine community.

### 2. What processes are in place to ensure adequate orientation, training and ongoing competency for personnel?

Because Health Care Facilities with Transfusion Medicine Services have to meet standards and regulations, there is an element of competency that must be met by all personnel involved with transfusion. CSA standards address the need for training programs to be established encompassing both initial and ongoing training. It also requires that these training programs be reviewed annually to assess the effectiveness of the training.<sup>1</sup> Training and competency assessment is required for Technologists as well as any individuals who handle and administer blood components or products. Ideally, there should be a formal program to assess skills that is developed by a multidisciplinary group including the Department of Nursing, Department of Laboratory, and the Department of Medicine.<sup>2</sup> Some facilities have adopted education programs that monitor the outcome of competency, by utilizing assessment tools such as direct observations, skill testing questionnaires and annual review of policies and procedures. As e-learning technology develops, more facilities are moving towards an electronic means of tracking assessment of skills and knowledge.

In the case presented in the ORBCoN Report Vol 4 Issue 1, February 2009, an understanding of the required standards as well as adherence to the facility procedures could possibly have prevented this error from occurring, and avoided the unnecessary waste of blood product and additional infusion for the patient. A good training program will also help staff understand the connection between compliance with standards and facility policies and procedures designed to improve patient safety.

#### References

1. Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Z92-04; March 2004; 4.3.2.
2. Ontario Laboratory Accreditation (OLA) Version 4.1 July 2008; TM111

