

Frequently Used Terms and Definitions for Blood Donor Professionals, 2024

Authors/Contributors

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Background

Blood transfusions save lives. According to the 2021 National Blood Collection and Utilization Survey, a blood transfusion occurs in the United States (U.S.) every two seconds. A foundational part of the healthcare system, blood centers in the U.S. provided 11,033,000 red blood cell units, 2,528,000 total units of platelets (both apheresis and whole blood derived), and 3,114,000 units of plasma to hospitals in 2021 (1). In the U.S., Overall, transfusion of blood and blood products occurs in 3.5% to 5.1% of hospital stays, depending on the patient's age group (2), making blood transfusions one of the most common hospital procedures. Blood transfusions are a critical life-saving treatment made possible only through donations from other healthy individuals.

A small portion of the U.S. population gives blood and the number of volunteers that give has declined in the last decade. Of the total population, 62% are eligible to donate, which amounts to 204.9 million eligible donors (3). However, only approximately 3% of the population donates blood each year (4). In 2021, there were approximately 6.5 million donors (5), an 11% drop from 2019, when approximately 7.3 million individuals donated (5). The need for blood is expansive and complicated due to the ongoing need for donations and increased donor declines in recent years.

About ADRP

ADRP, the Association for Blood Donor Professionals, supports more than 1,000 members in more than 25 countries as they seek to make blood donation a priority in every community worldwide. ADRP's mission is to empower blood donor professionals by providing a forum for creativity, innovation, collaboration, and development.

The association holds an annual conference that brings together hundreds of blood banking professionals for three days of keynote speakers, breakout sessions, roundtable discussions, workshops, and more. In addition, the association provides year-round educational content and, more recently, has included social science research as a key initiative in its strategic plan. These activities and collaborations

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aim to help member centers increase blood donations worldwide and ensure that blood transfusions are available to patients in need.

Introduction

It is paramount to ensure that blood centers can communicate and collaborate effectively with other blood centers, healthcare stakeholders, and the public. Terms and definitions currently used across the blood community have different meanings depending on how each professional or blood center interprets the word. These legacy definitions and/or individual preferences negatively impact the ability of stakeholders to compare research outcomes and case study findings, benchmark data points, compare strategies, share educational content, and achieve clarity and alignment when discussing key challenges and initiatives.

Since community blood centers operate independently of one another, standardization of terminology is critical. In the more regulated areas of blood banking, standardization is evident through governing bodies (such as the Food and Drug Administration's Code of Federal Regulation (CFR)) and accrediting associations like the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies (AABB). However, there are other areas of blood center operations where language can be left to the individual center to define and certain frequently used words currently have no industry definition standards.

Working Methodology

In January 2024, ADRP's Advisory Board determined the need for a working group to drive the standardization of common terms used in donor recruitment, marketing, public relations, donor collections, and center operations. A group of six multi-disciplinary blood center donor professionals volunteered to serve as working group members. In addition, the group invited an industry medical director with extensive work experience with research, publications, and standardization.

The group first met to create an initial list of words frequently used in the fields supported by ADRP. The list of 53 words was added to a shared Smartsheets document since members worked in various states across the United States. The shared document allowed collaboration, ranking, and member editing.

Once the document was prepared, members ranked each word based on their belief of importance. Members placed a value in their assigned voting column using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important. These columns were summed by row, and the words with the lowest scores were brought forward to the group for discussion.

The group sorted the terms to find common themes and establish categories. Terms were assigned a category of Donors Defined, Donation Type, Donation Outcomes, or Donor Communications. Once the list was sorted, the group prioritized which category to begin with and searched for words with published definitions. Those words were eliminated if a definition was already defined by a regulatory entity or other credible source.

The group created definitions in a shared document and reached a consensus on each term. The committee identified alternate definitions to ensure the terms were clearly defined yet simple to share.

Results

A terminology consensus agreement was reached on 14 terms and definitions.

Blood Donor	Unique individuals who have registered to donate blood.
Active Donor	Blood donors who have donated at least once within the last two years.
First Time Donor	Blood donors who gave blood for the first time to that organization including all procedure types.
Lapsed Donor	Blood donor's last donation was more than two years ago, but less than five years ago.
Super Lapsed Donor	Blood donor's last donation was five or more years ago.
Retention/Return Rate	The percentage of blood donors in one year who also donated the previous year.
Donor Frequency	The total number of donations in a year is divided by the total number of active donors in the annual donor base.
Show Rate	The percentage of donors who had an appointment and kept their appointment to donate.
Registrations	The number of individuals who present to donate blood. The word presentations is often used to describe registrations.
Procedures	Any attempted donation regardless of whether or not it was completed (needle in arm).
Products	Results from a blood donation which could be red cells, platelets, or plasma.
Successful donation	All procedures that collected at least one product.
Quantity Not Sufficient (QNS)	Quantity not sufficient (QNS) describes a failed phlebotomy procedure that did not yield a unit of blood or components to meet the minimum volume requirements.
Procedure Conversion Rate	Conversion rates are calculated by taking the total count of procedures who convert to a non-whole blood procedure, divided by the total procedures for that data set. The rate is displayed as a percentage.

Funding

There was no funding agency for this work.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Author's Notes

The terms and definitions in this publication and others added through the working group's ongoing work, will be included in an online resource glossary found at www.adrp.org.

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