

**Title: Standardizing Terminology Across the Blood Donor Profession**

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**Running Head: Standardizing Donor Terminology**

## Letter to the Editor

### Standardizing Terminology Across the Blood Donor Profession

Dear Editor,

As the blood community strives for greater cohesion in practice and reporting, a fundamental barrier remains: inconsistent definitions of core donor-related terms. The Association for Blood Donor Professionals (ADRP) has launched a global initiative to address this issue by developing standardized definitions for terms such as *active donor*, *lapsed donor*, *first-time donor*, and *successful donation*. This initiative will help create a shared language across recruitment, retention, and collection operations.

These commonly used terms are often interpreted differently between and even within organizations. For example, the length of time used to define a donor as "lapsed" may vary from 3 months to 24 months, depending on an organization's language. This variation impacts data benchmarking, strategic planning, donor re-engagement efforts, and the comparability of research.

To assess the breadth and urgency of this issue, ADRP conducted a global member survey. The survey received 144 complete responses representing a diverse cross-section of professionals and organizations across at least ten countries, including the United States, New Zealand, India, France, Uganda, Belgium, Iran, and Malaysia.

Survey findings include: Over 85% of respondents agreed that inconsistent definitions hinder effective performance comparisons across organizations. Many respondents noted operational confusion when using dashboards or metrics derived from ambiguous or center-specific criteria. Numerous comments emphasized the lack of standard definitions, which leads to "misalignment in KPIs," "difficulty interpreting multi-center data," and "challenges in educating new staff and stakeholders." Respondents also highlighted the strategic risk in public-facing communication, specifically donor confusion resulting from terminology differences between centers.

Their comments were especially revealing:

*"The only way to get meaningful data that can be measured and compared is by having common definitions."*

*"Trying to align KPIs with external partners is difficult when each group defines donors differently."*

*"Even internally, our definitions vary between departments. It makes onboarding new staff and aligning goals more complicated than it should be."*

The insights from the survey respondents validate the need for a structured, consensus-driven glossary of terminology. Recognizing this, ADRP convened a multidisciplinary working group composed of six experienced

donor professionals from geographically diverse community blood centers, along with an industry medical director with expertise in standardization and publication. The group's objective was to define terms that are commonly used but variably interpreted, with a focus on those central to donor management and operational reporting.

The group began with a collaborative list of 53 frequently used terms, compiled, and ranked using a shared digital platform. Members voted on the perceived importance of each term using a weighted scale. The top-ranked terms were then reviewed and grouped into four categories: Donors Defined, Donation Type, Donation Outcomes, and Donor Communications. Definitions were crafted through collaborative consensus, guided by clarity, accuracy, and utility across various center types. As a result, the group achieved consensus on 47 standardized definitions. Terms with existing definitions from regulatory or accrediting bodies were excluded to avoid redundancy.

The group anticipates that this terminology standardization will improve clarity and consistency in internal performance tracking; enable meaningful comparisons across centers and countries; support collaborative donor recruitment and retention strategies; enhance public understanding of donation terminology; and foster more reproducible academic and operational research.

The definitions developed by the working group are now being incorporated into ADRP's official resources, including a publicly available glossary on [www.adrp.org](http://www.adrp.org). Table 1 is the complete list of terms and definitions the working group has completed. We believe this initiative is an important step toward strengthening data transparency, supporting shared understanding, and promoting best practices across organizations.

Sincerely,

Theresa Pina<sup>1</sup>, Danielle West<sup>2</sup>, Amanda Hess<sup>3</sup>, Dawn Kaiser<sup>4</sup>, JD Pettyjohn<sup>5</sup>, Brittany Sigel<sup>6</sup>, Kate Fry-Cicero<sup>7</sup>

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Table 1:

<b>Word</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Blood Donor	<b>Donors Defined</b>	Unique individuals who have registered to donate blood.
Active Donor	<b>Donors Defined</b>	Blood donor who has donated at least one time within the last 2 years.
First Time Donor	<b>Donors Defined</b>	Blood donor who gave blood for the first time with your organization (includes all procedure types).
Lapsed Donor	<b>Donors Defined</b>	The blood donor's last donation was more than 2 years ago but less than 5 years ago.
Super Lapsed Donor	<b>Donors Defined</b>	The blood donor's last donation was more than 5 years ago.
Retention/Return Rate	<b>Donors Defined</b>	Percentage of blood donors in one year who also donated the previous year.
Donor Frequency	<b>Donors Defined</b>	Total number of donations in a year / total number of active donors in the annual donor base.
Show Rate	<b>Donors Defined</b>	Percentage of donors who had an appointment and kept their appointment to donate.
Registrations	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	The number of individuals who present to donate blood. The word "presentation" is often used to describe a registration.
Donations	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	A specific individual attempts to give blood. This may include a donation registration, an attempted donation procedure, and/or a successful donation procedure.
Procedures	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	Any attempted donation, regardless of whether or not it was completed (needle in arm).
Products	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	Results from a blood donation, which may include red blood cells, platelets, plasma, or cryoprecipitate.
Successful donation	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	All procedures that collected at least one product
Deferred	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	A donor is temporarily or permanently unable to donate.
Quantity Not Sufficient (QNS)	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	Quantity Not Sufficient (QNS) describes a failed phlebotomy procedure that did not yield a unit of blood or components that met the minimum volume requirements.
Procedure Split Rate	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	The components collected in a single procedure are divided by the procedure.
Procedure Conversion Rate	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	Conversion rates are calculated by dividing the total number of procedures that convert to a non-whole blood procedure by the total number of procedures for that data set. The rate is displayed as a percentage.
Donation conversion	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	Converting a donor from one procedure type to another procedure type before the procedure begins
Automation rate/conversion rate/gain	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	The rate of donors collected/sum of products collected.

Eligible	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	A donor is able to give blood that day based on the donor history questionnaire and pre-donation mini-physical.
Donor left	<b>Donation Outcome</b>	The donor registered but then left before the donation process began.
Whole Blood	<b>Donation Type</b>	A whole blood donation is the most common and traditional form of blood donation. In this process, the donor gives all components of their blood together, which includes red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets, and plasma.
Double Red Cell	<b>Donation Type</b>	A double red blood cell donation is a type of blood donation where the donor gives only red blood cells while other components, such as plasma and platelets, are returned to the donor's body. This procedure is done through a process called apheresis.
Apheresis	<b>Donation Type</b>	Apheresis is a medical procedure that involves separating and collecting specific components of blood while returning the rest to the body. These would be non-whole blood procedures collected on an automated platform.
Blood Components	<b>Donation Type</b>	Blood products manufactured from a unit of whole blood, in addition to the core red blood cell product, include, but are not limited to, plasma, platelets, and cryoprecipitate.
Therapeutic Donation	<b>Donation Type</b>	A medical procedure that a donor's physician orders to treat the donor for a condition as a patient. The donor is considered a patient, and the procedure is considered a patient service.
Concurrent Product	<b>Donation Type</b>	A blood product that is collected in addition to the targeted product type of the procedure. It is a component that is produced at the bedside via an apheresis procedure, as opposed to a component that is produced in the component manufacturing laboratory post-procedure.
Directed Donation	<b>Donation Type</b>	A directed blood donation is a type of blood donation in which the donor gives blood specifically for a particular patient, rather than for general use. This donation is intended for a person with a specific medical need, and the blood is reserved exclusively for that individual.
Autologous Donation	<b>Donation Type</b>	An autologous blood donation is when a patient donates their own blood in advance, ordered by a physician, typically for use during a future medical procedure or surgery.
Fixed Site	<b>Operational Term</b>	A permanent, stationary donation center location with regular hours of operation that is managed and staffed by the blood center and registered with the FDA.

In-center blood drive	<b>Operational Term</b>	A sponsored blood drive at a fixed site.
Mobile Blood Drive	<b>Operational Term</b>	A blood drive event held at a location outside a blood center's facility, often sponsored by a third-party entity in the community and/or coordinated by a community volunteer.
Bloodmobile/Bus/Coach	<b>Operational Term</b>	A vehicle that is set up to function as a self-contained blood drive unit where staff can perform donor registration, screening, and donation procedures with volunteer donors inside the vehicle.
Blood Drive Coordinator/Chairperson	<b>Operational Term</b>	A volunteer from the community who agrees to host and coordinate a blood drive event, either at a mobile location or at a blood center fixed site.
Inside setup blood drive	<b>Operational Term</b>	A type of mobile blood drive event that takes place within the facility of a host sponsor group's location.
Group Frequency	<b>Operational Term</b>	Annual frequency of unique blood drives.
Field Recruiter/Territory Representative/Account Rep	<b>Operational Term</b>	A blood center staff member who is responsible for business-to-business recruitment of blood drive host groups or blood drive sponsor groups.
Dash Rate	<b>Operational Term</b>	A calculation that evaluates productive units of blood collected divided by the hours of a blood drive or donor center event (not including setup/teardown or travel) divided by the number of staff assigned to the collection operation event.
Projection Accuracy	<b>Operational Term</b>	Percentage of Procedures performed as compared to the number of Procedures projected to be performed.
Cost Per Unit (CPU)	<b>Operational Term</b>	Cost per unit is a calculation that involves the sum of selected fixed and/or variable costs divided by the product(s), or outcomes of a donation.
ROI	<b>Recruitment Term</b>	ROI stands for return on investment. It measures the money your organization spent against the revenue generated by the effort.
Click Through Rate	<b>Recruitment Term</b>	A click-through rate (CTR) is the ratio of clicks to impressions on a mobile advertising campaign. CTRs are calculated by dividing the number of clicks on a mobile advertising campaign by the overall impressions and then expressing the resultant figure as a percentage.
Calls per hour	<b>Recruitment Term</b>	The number of calls a call center makes per hour.
Rescheduling/Rebooking	<b>Recruitment Term</b>	Rebooking is the process of scheduling an additional follow-up appointment at the time of a current donation prior to the donor's next eligibility.
Right Party Contact	<b>Recruitment Term</b>	The right party contact occurs when the intended audience of a contact outreach receives the outreach. For telephone

		communication this occurs when the donor being contacted answers the phone.
Impressions	<b>Recruitment Term</b>	An impression is when a user sees an advertisement. In practice, an impression occurs any time a user opens an app or website, and an advertisement is visible.
Cost Per Click	<b>Recruitment Term</b>	Cost per click (CPC) measures the average cost an advertiser pays for each click on their ad by a user.