

# Blood Matters on the Bench and Beyond

Issue 2 – April 2020

Welcome to the Blood Matters newsletter for Scientists, written for Victorian transfusion scientists. It will be distributed throughout the year to share information that may be helpful to you, and to let you know of upcoming activities which may be of interest.

## Update to ANZSBT Guidelines for Transfusion and Immunohaematology Practice

The guidelines have been updated and published in January 2020. They are available on the [ANZSBT webpage](#)

There is a summary of changes at the back of the document, however this is a good time to review the document as a whole to refresh our knowledge.

## Survey for Scientists

Thank you to you all who took the time to complete the Blood Matters survey for scientists which was circulated with the previous newsletter.

Blood Matters will be working towards implementing some of the tools and resources that have been requested by you through the survey.

## Red cell wastage – festive campaign “STOP the Waste”

We had a very impressive start to the festive season red cell wastage rate with the December wastage at 1.6%, below the national average of 1.9%.

The wastage rate for February 2020 was 2.0% with the national average at 2.1%. February is traditionally when the peak wastage has occurred, so thank you everyone for your efforts in keeping this at a very respectable figure. Your commitment to ensuring the donor's precious gift is not wasted was commendable. We encourage your continued efforts through the remainder of the year.

## COVID-19

Thank you for sharing the changes and strategies that you have put in place to assist with the response to COVID-19. It has been very valuable to be able to share these strategies across health services to provide ideas and assist with implementing any necessary changes to assure a safe blood supply.

We welcome any further suggestions or initiatives that you have implemented that may be helpful for others to know about in relation to dealing with COVID-19.

Of particular importance at this point in time is the focus on minimising wastage. There has been an increase in wastage through March 2020, which may be attributable to decreased demand for blood components resulting from a reduction in services in some organisations. Please take the time to review your inventory levels and adjust if appropriate.

## BloodNet discard episodes

When discarding blood products in BloodNet due to potential respiratory droplet contamination please discard with the applicable discard code, for example:

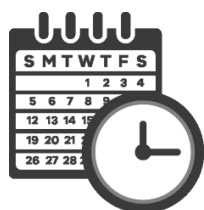
- Clinical – ordered for patient, not required or
  - Storage – out of controlled storage or
  - Other
- } please enter notes relating to COVID-19 in the comments field.

The BloodNet team have been contacted regarding the feasibility of adding a COVID-19 specific discard code. In the interim, please use comments to note where blood component discards are attributed to COVID-19.

## Has a blood component/product been at risk of COVID-19 contamination?

Scenarios in which blood components and products must be discarded in relation to COVID-19 should be discussed with your infection control team. The risk of contamination must be taken into account and not every product that leaves the transfusion laboratory will be at risk.

Some sites have implemented a process where a signed statement is included with each blood component/product returned to the laboratory, stating if there has not been a risk of contamination from COVID-19.



### Save the Date - Blood Matters Scientist Summit

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, Batman Street, West Melbourne

***Blood Matters will continue to evaluate options in light of COVID-19 and will provide any status changes as soon as they become available.***

- A free and catered education day aimed at transfusion scientists of all levels, offering scientific and local industry updates
- Please let us know any topics, challenges or issues you would like included in the day. We are planning an interactive day to share expertise and experiences to contribute to the greater transfusion community.
- Discuss your interest in attending this summit with your senior scientist for rostering purposes.
- Further information about the event will be circulated later in the year.



### National certification of the medical scientist profession

A national professional certification scheme for the medical laboratory science profession in Australia will come into effect in July 2020.

The Australian Council for Certification of the Medical Laboratory Scientific Workforce (ACCMLSW) is a newly created not for profit company established to administer the voluntary certification scheme.

- Join as a pilot tester now to receive 20% discount on the normal application fee at: <https://accmlsw.wildapricot.org/>
- You will need to upload
  - A certificate of primary qualification
  - Continuing professional development (CPD) record – PDF copy of the most recent CPD certificate or an outline of CPD activities in the previous 2 years
  - Declaration of competency assessment and experience (downloadable from the website) signed by your employer.

### Why become certified?

- This can be seen as a first step towards mandatory certification, which would ensure only high calibre practitioners are employed in our laboratories, demanding recognition of our professional standing as part of Australia's health service workforce.
- Certification will be the best benchmark available to assure competent professional practice.

- With a certified workforce there will be more obligation on the employer to ensure staff have professional development opportunities afforded to them.
- As a nationally certified medical scientist you can demonstrate your ongoing commitment to professional development and self-improvement and be recognised as passionate, progressive and pro-active.

Blood Matters is committed to providing support and education to assist in the early stages of this scheme, if you require any assistance or have any questions feel free to contact Rae French at [rfrench@redcrossblood.org.au](mailto:rfrench@redcrossblood.org.au) or by phone on 03 9694 3524.

## How can Blood Matters help you?

The Blood Matters team is here to assist health services and laboratories through education and providing resources.

We welcome open and collaborative discussion to ensure we can work together to support and enhance your contribution to safe, efficient and effective blood management.

If you have suggestions, comments or ideas on tools and resources that could assist in day to day activities and towards achieving accreditation please let Rae or any of the Blood Matters team know by email to [bloodmatters@redcrossblood.org.au](mailto:bloodmatters@redcrossblood.org.au)

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 03 9694 0102, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email Blood Matters [bloodmatters@redcrossblood.org.au](mailto:bloodmatters@redcrossblood.org.au)

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