Press Release

Donate components and not whole blood, says IMA

- **Paradigm shift in blood donation today**
- **Refrain from donating blood if donated blood is collected in a single bag**

**New Delhi, 10 July 2017:** According to statistics, although India has a huge population of more than 1.3 billion, there is still a shortage of blood by about 20% to 25%. Blood donation is a requirement of the society. However, it should not be a forced activity, but rather, voluntary. Additionally, the blood that is donated as a part of voluntary blood donation should be maximally utilized.

Blood donation camps organized by hospitals and NGOs are usually whole blood donation camps. However, the current requirement is that no camp should be organized as a ‘whole blood donation’ camp but as a components-only blood donation camp.

Speaking about this, **Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement**, said, "Voluntary blood donation camps should henceforth be called ‘blood component donation’ camps. People should refrain from giving blood if the blood being donated is collected in a single bag. Usually two component bags are used and 100 ml bags should be promoted for pediatric use. A single unit of blood can be used to help 3 to 4 patients. However, it is being wasted as whole blood depriving another patient in need. Under the new National Blood Transfusion Council regulations, no blood is to be wasted. The surplus left over plasma is fractionated to manufacture products like albumin and intravenous immunoglobulins (IVIG). Lastly, people with rare blood groups should not donate in camps but instead donate only when needed."

Currently, the tests done before possible blood donation are for the following: blood groups (A, B, O) and Rh factor and five transfusion-transmitted infections namely hepatitis B and C viruses, HIV 1 & 2, VDRL, and malaria. Tests with the shortest window are chosen as per affordability.

Adding further, **Dr Aggarwal**, said, "For safe blood transfusion, tests other than those prescribed by the government should also be available such as minor blood groups and nucleic acid amplification testing (NAT). The doctor also has a duty to inform the donor that facilities for these other tests are also available and the donor or the recipient should have the right to ask for extra tests. Till a national policy is formulated in this regard, a doctor can help the donor or the recipient in deciding.
An informed consent must be taken from the donor or the recipient explaining the risks by not doing these tests, however small and rare they might be. Although these tests may add to the cost of blood transfusion, patient safety is foremost."

Rational blood transfusion is safe blood transfusion. Blood should be transfused only when necessary. If only one unit is required, don’t transfuse blood; if two units are required, transfuse one. If hemoglobin is more than 7, give a trial of intravenous iron first. This is also an important way to reduce transfusion-transmitted infections.

Few things to observe before donating blood.

- It is important for a person to have stable blood pressure, haemoglobin, and weight to be deemed fit for blood donation.
- Eat something light before donating blood. Avoid consumption of alcohol or smoking the night before.
- Drink enough water or other fluids. This will help you stay hydrated as the fluids get retrieved in 24 hours post blood donation. Do not consume aerated drinks or carbonated beverages.
- Do not exercise or perform any strenuous physical activity after donating blood as there are high chances of suffering from dizziness.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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