

Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: To find out whether frequent blood transfusions increase the risk of transfusion-related HIV infection in children with Sickle cell anaemia. **METHODS:** One hundred and ninety-eight children with Sickle cell anaemia were transfused 1-13 times (mean 2,4) between 1982 and 1987. In Kenya routine screening of blood banks for HIV infection began in 1987. The HIV status of these children was compared with 231 non-transfused children: 106 with Sickle cell anaemia and 125 children with haemoglobin AA. In both transfused and non-transfused children age ranges were similar and were 1-12 years. All children were tested with Wellcozyme Elisa test in duplicate. All tests were performed at least 6 months after the last transfusion. Sixty five transfused sicklers were rechecked one year later. **RESULTS:** All 429 children were HIV negative. **CONCLUSIONS:** Our findings suggest that HIV seropositivity is low in Kenyan children. Furthermore, even though blood was unscreened in 1982 - 1987 transfusion did not increase the risk of HIV infection in our study children