Abstract

BACKGROUND:

Blood transfusion is always associated with some level of risk. Haemovigilance is a risk monitoring system integral to the practice of transfusion medicine whose ultimate purpose is to improve the quality and safety of transfusion therapy.

OBJECTIVE:

To examine the contribution of haemovigilance to blood safety, including the approaches that some countries have taken to institute haemovigilance, and explore routes through which countries without such systems can achieve them. Data sources: The internet and journals on the topic of haemovigilance and development of haemovigilance systems in the English language.

DATA SELECTION:

Reputable journals on the topic of haemovigilance were examined for abstracts and papers. Abstracts based on known credible and distinguished sources were selected.

DATA EXTRACTION:

Information on haemovigilance and the processes of developing haemovigilance in various countries was reviewed.

DATA SYNTHESIS:

The information from selected papers and abstracts was used for writing this paper.

CONCLUSION:

Varying processes for haemovigilance have been adopted by different countries. The more advanced systems have national/regional coordinating mechanisms. Availability of haemovigilance data has given transfusion services a clear understanding of problems associated with transfusion that need to be solved so as to improve transfusion safety. Although countries in sub-Saharan Africa have made considerable progress in enhancing blood safety in the recent past, nationally coordinated haemovigilance systems are lacking. Focus on haemovigilance systems is considered the next frontier to be conquered in enhancing blood safety in the region.