

Blood transfusion research network in Africa

Background

At the 5th AfSBT International Congress in Nairobi in 2009, many people expressed considerable interest in a 'network' to help link researchers with an interest in blood transfusion in Africa and build critical mass. The precise role and function of such a network was not defined.

In association with AfSBT and T-REC, a concept note was developed to suggest that the network could do the following:

1. Build an electronic database of researchers with an interest in blood transfusion in Africa
2. Map current research activity in blood transfusion in Africa
3. (Re-)define research priorities in blood transfusion research in Africa and identify barriers to research.

On 6th June 2012, the T-REC Consortium organised a meeting at the Annual AfSBT International Congress in Mauritius to further define the network. Thank you to everyone who attended and participated (around 50 people).

We discussed the possibilities of building such a research network. Three groups each discussed these questions:

- What should a network do to be useful?
- Who should be involved in the network?
- How should the network achieve what it sets out to do?

Please read on to find out the results of the discussions.

Next steps: The T-REC consortium, in association with AfSBT will explore opportunities and funding to develop the network including governance and management structures and an online networking platform. If you have anything more to add, please email trec@liverpool.ac.uk.

What should a network do to be useful?

Share ideas

Discussion forums
Social networking/workspace
Sharing of ideas

Share resources

Publications (archive or links)
Unpublished work
Clinical guidelines

Share knowledge

Continuing Professional
Development

Share experience/expertise

Mentoring
Exchange programmes

Share opportunities

Calls for funding
Research collaborations
Meetings

Share information

Database of 'members'
Database of interest groups

Advocate and set priorities

Audit/quality improvement

How should a network achieve what it sets out to do?

Governance

Virtual advisory board
Regional representation
Simple constitution
Consensus model for management

Coordination and collaboration

Rules for communicating
Complement AfSBT structures
Involve health journalists

Electronic platform

Unique website
Should be self-regulated

Face-to-face meetings

Overlap with conferences
Seminars/workshops
Strategy development

Who should be included in a network?

The research network should be inclusive. This means inviting anyone with an interest in research in blood transfusion in Africa. Research is defined broadly and membership is irrespective of research experience or academic qualifications.

All of Africa is included: Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone.

Members might be from:

Research institutes

Universities and academic institutions
Research collaborations:
e.g. GRTAF, T-REC, REDS-III

Existing organisations

AfSBT, ISBT, Safe Blood for Africa

Donor organisations

Club 25

Patient groups

Haemophilia, sickle cell

Transfusion Services

NGOs and HIV/AIDS Organisations

Policy-makers

National (e.g. Ministries of Health)
International (e.g. WHO)

Clinicians

All cadres
Professional organisations e.g.
(pathologists, anaesthetists etc etc)

'Industry'

Pharmaceutical and equipment
companies

Journalists