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Quality Network WHO Quality Management Programme

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Global Newsletter

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Greetings from Blood Transfusion Safety/Blood Safety and Clinical Technology BTS/BCT/WHO/Geneva

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I write a message of greeting to all of you who have been involved in the Quality Management Programme (QMP) over the past two years.

As you are aware, one of the aims of this initiative is to develop a network to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place for communication as well as for follow-up and post-training support. During the Quality Management Training (QMT) courses, we learned that identifying problems and seeking solutions is part of the continuous improvement of any quality system, and therefore, the sharing of experiences on a global basis will assist us all in our efforts to improve. As the most important aspect of any network is the people who contribute to it, to that end, I urge all of you to send in any news, stories or anecdotes you may wish to contribute regarding your experiences in implementing quality systems in your BTS.

I wish all of you well in your endeavours, and look forward to the contributions you will make to this triennial publication. This newsletter, along with other mechanisms, will ultimately strengthen the global quality network.

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Quality Starts with Me: Who is responsible for quality in the BTS?

One of the major problems encountered while implementing quality systems in the BTS is the misconception that quality is something that “belongs” to one distinct department, or sometimes even to just one person. This misconception is very difficult to overcome, and will only be achieved by handing over the “ownership” of quality to all BTS staff. Thus, the commitment of all staff to quality assists in developing a “culture of quality” in a BTS.

The term ownership is often used during QMT courses, and this should be further examined for all its meanings and implications. For example, how does ownership relate to standard operating procedures (SOPs)? And is ownership only concerned with the preparation of an SOP? The answer is no, it shouldn't be. All staff involved in their BTS should ensure that:

- The instructions in the SOP are followed
- The SOP is the correct and current version.
- The SOP is part of the document control system.
- All relevant staff performing the SOP are trained and certified as competent as per the SOP.
- In order to take ownership, all relevant staff should be aware of their right to insist on such training and certification.

Visit the website: <http://www.who.int/bct>

The website contains information regarding various activities carried out in the QMP. It will soon be expanded to accommodate information on WHO External Quality Assessment (EQA) Schemes.

News from Geneva

Development of the QMP has only been possible through the collaboration of WHO Geneva and the Regional Offices. Several QMT courses have been organized, and participating centres have been enrolled in External Quality Assessment Schemes (EQAS). The Regional Quality Training Centres in most regions have also played a key role in maintaining the impetus of the work done to ensure continued progress in the QMP. Major activities in 2000-2002 included:

- Consultations to develop the components of the QMP.
- A meeting with core facilitators to develop a toolkit for use by all facilitators.
- Development of a core curriculum for a structured course on quality management to assist facilitators in carrying out effective, standardized training.

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- An informal consultation to evaluate, review and re-plan the QMP. All the partners involved—i.e. experts, facilitators, coordinators and WHO Regional Advisers—participated in this meeting. The recommendations of this consultation re-defined the scope of the QMP.
- Meetings of the editorial group established to develop materials to support the QMP.
- Finalization of the toolkits for facilitators of the QMT courses and the QMP coordinators.
- WHO Geneva continued to actively support both the QMT courses and the specific follow-up courses held at both regional and country levels.

Materials Development in Quality

Facilitators: Toolkits will be available in both printed and electronic formats, and will be disseminated in mid-2003.

Coordinators: The draft document on coordination was extensively reviewed and has now been expanded to cover post-training coordination and follow-up.

Advocacy:

- An *Aide-Mémoire: Quality Systems for Blood Safety* has been developed and disseminated in several languages, including English, Portuguese and Chinese. Translation into other languages will be completed in 2003.
- Guidelines: The work on guidelines for *Developing a Quality System in Blood Transfusion Services* for policy-makers has also reached its final stages, and will be available in 2003

External Quality Assessment Schemes (EQAS)

WHO International and Regional EQA Schemes (IEQAS and REQAS) for blood group serology and transfusion-transmissible infections have been organized, with WHO providing the support for establishing national EQAS. This project has been further strengthened by a recently-concluded, two-week training course (held in Bangkok, Thailand) for participants from organizing centres for EQAS in blood group serology. This course reflected a true collaboration between WHO Geneva and the Regional Offices, with technical support from the WHO IEQAS centre which organizes the scheme for the UK National External Quality Assessment Schemes (UKNEQAS).

News from AFRO

The Regional Office for Africa deals with three distinct sub-regions, based on language divisions: English-speaking (Anglophone), French-speaking (Francophone) and Portuguese-speaking (Lusophone) countries.



Photo 1. QMT course participants, Harare 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT WHO

The 192 Member States are divided into six regions, largely based on geographical distribution. These are the Regional Offices for:

- ◆ Africa (AFRO) - <http://www.afro.who.int/>
- ◆ Americas/Pan American Health Organization (AMRO/PAHO) - <http://www.paho.org/news/>
- ◆ Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) <http://www.emro.who.int>
- ◆ Europe (EURO) - <http://www.euro.who.int/>
- ◆ South-East Asia (SEARO) - <http://w3.whosea.org/>
- ◆ Western Pacific (WPRO) - <http://www.wpro.who.int/>

Since the QMP started in 2000, five QMT courses have been held, resulting in BTS staff being trained as quality managers from the majority of AFRO countries. Three follow-up courses have been held, and although participants still encounter problems with implementing a quality system, many positive outcomes have occurred. Some countries reported that they had held national training courses using presentations and activities from the QMT Facilitators' Toolkit. Many also reported that SOPs had been developed for certain areas of the BTS, and most participating centres have now been enrolled into the EQAS for both transfusion-transmissible infections and blood group serology.

News from AMRO

Activities in AMRO have focused on many different aspects of implementing quality systems, due to the diversity in the level of development in the region. Thirty-eight participants from 19 different Latin American countries took part in QMT. For this purpose, the QMT Facilitators' Toolkit was modified and translated into Spanish, and national workshops have now been organized in eight countries. Additionally, quality assurance workshops have been held covering both transfusion-transmissible infections (TTIs) and blood group serology, incorporating detailed information on EQAS. 80 quality managers were trained in auditing techniques with support from the American Association of Blood Banks. EQAS now covers at least one blood bank in each country of the region. Development of standards for both the Caribbean and Latin American countries have proved invaluable in assessing the quality situation in these countries. Standards are largely used for self-assessment exercises.

News from EMRO

The EMRO region has held five meetings/training workshops, including sensitization for Directors of BTSs, regional facilitators and quality managers. French-language QMT courses have been held in Amman, Jordan and in Tunis, Tunisia. The National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) in Egypt has modified its QMT curriculum in a manner that allowed all personnel working in quality to be trained over a period of two months. Networking in the region has resulted in a twinning programme that has Egypt (as the major partner) providing guidance and assistance to Yemen and Sudan. The first step in the twinning programme will be to train ten participants from these two countries. This course will be facilitated and coordinated by NBTS in Egypt.

News from EURO

The European region of WHO is a vast and diverse area, with many newly emerging countries with varying levels of socio-economic development, and this is reflected in the status of their BTSs. In this respect, attention has been focused on Central and Eastern Europe, and the first meeting of Directors of BTSs, followed by a QMT course, was organized in 2001 with the assistance of the WHO Collaborating Centre in Groningen, The Netherlands. A second Directors' meeting involving decision-makers from 14 countries was hosted by the Blood Transfusion Centre of Slovenia in September 2002. Two months later, seven of the participant countries sent their selected specialists on the QMT course. Two new courses, using Russian translations of the training materials, are planned for 2003.

News from SEARO

BTS Directors and regional facilitators met in early 2001 in New Delhi, India, and the first training course, held in Bangkok, Thailand, was attended by 24 participants from ten countries. National training courses were held in India, Indonesia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, and a sub-regional training course was held in Bangladesh for a number of SEARO countries.



Photo 2. South-East Asia region (in yellow)

The mechanism of follow-up in SEARO has largely involved the distribution and analysis of the quality status questionnaire by the Regional Quality Training Centre in Thailand. The EQAS for TTIs has been a medium-term project in both SEARO and WPRO. This scheme is run by the National Serology Reference Laboratory (NRL), Australia. The EQAS for blood group serology is organized by the Bureau of Laboratory Quality Standards, Thailand.

News from WPRO

The major challenge in this region has been the identification of the mechanisms required to respond to the needs of Western Pacific countries. To achieve this, an advocacy meeting of Directors and regional facilitators was held in Singapore in 2001. Enthusiastic recognition of the need to adopt the concepts of the QMP, combined with the strong commitment of Chinese national health authorities, resulted in a national level meeting of BTS Directors in Beijing two months later. The first regional QMT for 11 countries in the region took place at the National Blood Centre, Singapore in 2002, followed by two national courses; one in China and the other in the Philippines. WHO EQAS for TTIs is already covered by the scheme run by NRL, Australia. WHO Regional EQAS for blood group

serology will be implemented in 2003, with the National Blood Service, Malaysia identified as the organizing centre.



Photo 3. Directors/facilitators meeting, Singapore 2001

Focus on Country Projects: Egypt

In this issue, the experience of Egypt is shared with all readers. You are invited to send in articles about your own experiences.

An example of capacity building

The Ministry of Health and Population in Egypt started a rehabilitation plan for its national blood service in 1997 with the assistance of the Swiss government, resulting in the implementation of the Egypt/Switzerland Project for the restructuring of the NBTS. During the QMT course for EMRO countries, seven quality officers from Egypt were trained. These seven participants came back with great enthusiasm, and have truly made a difference in their regional centres. They have helped in the document control process, formulating quality policy and planning, as well as new SOPs and many other aspects of quality implementation.

It has also been decided to further develop national capacity by training 100 key position personnel from eight regional centres in the NBTS. The QMT curriculum was modified to allow the training to be spread over eight weeks, and the trained quality officers, along with myself, are now the national trainers.

The QMP started in July 2002, and should run until June 2003, during which six eight-week courses (two working days a week) are to be held. Each course can accommodate 15 to 20 trainees, each of whom is given the material (presentations and activities) from the Participants' Workbook. We are finding the Facilitators' Toolkit a very useful tool for assisting us in QMT. It is envisaged that by the end of this programme, 100 trainees and 20 "cascade" trainers will have successfully completed the QMT courses, and they are expected to make a great difference in their working environments.

In conclusion, the WHO QMP is a very valuable programme which, given enough time, will greatly contribute to the reform process of the Egyptian blood service.

Dr Faten Moftah
 Director, National Blood Transfusion Service
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Latest developments

All of us who have gone through the process of implementing quality systems have experienced the problems of establishing standards for the national BTS. The lack of guidance on what should or should not be included, on how to formulate standards to ensure control with built-in flexibility, and on how to decide which international standards the BTSs are to refer to, are some of the difficulties we encounter.

As part of the work done by the Global Collaboration for Blood Safety (GCBS), a Working Group on Quality and Assistance for Development is developing standards for the BTSs. The document, *Minimum Requirements for Blood Transfusion Services*, is currently in its second draft and is expected to be completed by December 2003. The document will include standards for:

- Quality management systems
- Facilities and resources
- Health and hygiene
- Blood donors
- Blood collection
- Testing of donated units
- Processing
- Storage and transportation
- Compatibility testing
- Clinical use of blood.

Upcoming Events in 2003 ...

- ❖ Training of regional facilitators and launch of QMT Facilitators' Toolkit – Slovenia
- ❖ Training of QMP Coordinators – Malaysia
- ❖ QMT course for Pacific Island countries – Singapore

It is anticipated that the document will go a long way in guiding newly-trained quality officers and managers in preparing standards for their BTSs. GCBS is also investigating mechanisms to assist national BTSs with accreditation programmes.

Contact us:

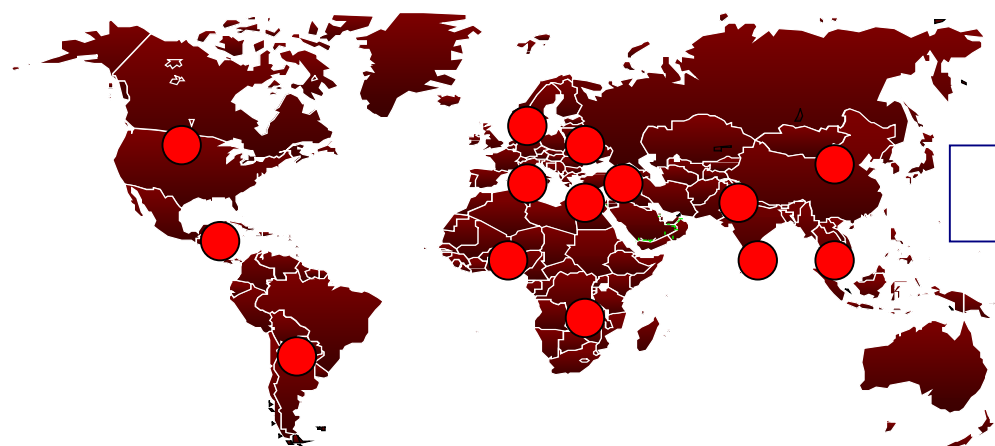
Blood Transfusion Safety (BTS) within the Department of Blood Safety and Clinical Technology (BCT) would welcome any news from you regarding your progress in establishing and implementing a quality system. Your experiences in establishing quality systems at your workplace are also most welcome.

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http://www.who.int/bct/Main_areas_of_work/BTS/QMP/About_QMP.htm



WHO QMP activities
around the world

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