EASTERN EUROPE

First Anatolian Blood Days

were organised in Turkey

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The Blood Banking and Transfusion Society of Turkey (BBTST) launched the first Anatolian Blood Days in Antalya, Turkey to meet its international and regional responsibilities.

Representatives from transfusion services in the region surrounding Turkey were invited to participate in a two day meeting to explore the various approaches to establish the national policy and regulatory framework in their respective countries.

Participants from 9 services accepted the invitation to meet with experts from Blood Banks and BBTST. During two days, these experts shared and exchanged their experiences about challenges they faced while starting to set up the national regulatory frameworks and practical measures to establish safe, reliable and sustainable services.

Discussions revealed that the recommendations promoted internationally were not always "fit for purpose" in dealing with the wide range of challenges met in most of the countries participating in this gathering.

Representatives of Bosnia Herzegovina described difficulties of a different kind of fragmentation, this unusual form of state found itself emerging in the epicentre of the Balkan conflict with inherent internal malformations leading to its isolation. Trying, with great difficulty, in the midst of intense surrounding pressures, to establish viable services with normal acceptable criteria of quality, safety and reliability proved to be a daunting task.

The uphill struggle experienced by Albania, Egypt, Iran and Turkey, who were on the road to progress. Building the regulatory framework in these countries has taken time, effort and resources. The example of these four countries provided hope to participants from Afghanistan and Tajikistan where services were challenged by very limited infrastructure and lack of human and financial resources. It was clear that when local characteristics are taken in consideration, specific solutions would be discovered, and the appropriate system will eventually start to take shape.

This initiative led and supported by the BBTST provided the suitable forum to formulate a suitable generic "Blue Print". It is hoped that it will prove useful to assist services in trouble and facilitate the efforts of others looking for ways to resolve the problems on the road to progress in order to achieve sustainability and good quality transfusion practice.

The social program was also rich and varied enough to suit all age groups and tastes. One evening was dedicated for the young, enjoying the standing and "hand-waving" concert atmosphere led by a Turkish well known popular "Diva". The star of the second day was the Symphony Orchestra of Antalya with its impressive well-established conductor Emin Guven Yaslicam and Antalya Philharmonic Orchestra. The hall was packed with seated senior members as well as young professionals that would not release the orchestra before two encores!

It has been a revealing experience to share with the Turkish society their 5th Annual Congress as well as the launch of their neighbourly international initiative to help services in need and prepare the generic blue print for services and guidance for fellow professionals, to take them out of their isolation and share experience without intimidation of high tech, high power meetings, in order to find the way for development, progress and sustainability.

It was a non-threatening friendly forum where professionals from the "G 12" services could share their experiences without reservation or embarrassment and reveal their aches and pains, stumbling blocks, serious worries and concerns on the hope to find assistance from the experience of fellow colleagues who were there and just made it.

Consensus declaration of principles

1. A national blood policy should identify at a high level the direction and strategies to provide a safe and adequate blood supply to meet the needs of the population. The intentions of the policy should be expressed in legislation, supported where necessary by regulations and guidelines. The legislative framework reflects the agreed national policy and identifies clearly the issues that need to be protected and regulated through the legal system.
2. Health Authorities must endorse National laws, regulations and guidelines on blood banking and transfusion medicine and require that relevant institutions and personnel should comply with them
3. Professional bodies and experts in transfusion medicine should be proactive in initiating and supporting the formulation of the national policy and guidelines.
4. The whole process of transfusion from the donor to the patient - should be supported by national laws, regulations and guidelines
5. The application of National laws, regulations and guidelines on blood banking and transfusion medicine must be supported by an effective quality system and an effective regulatory framework
6. Every country must prepare its own national laws, regulations and guidelines on blood banking and transfusion medicine according to its own situation with regard to its own economic, socio-cultural and health situation. A country in the process of the formulation of national laws and guidelines should examine existing international and national laws and guidelines and may decide to adopt those elements that are considered to be appropriate for that country
7. Development of guidelines on blood banking and transfusion must be the responsibility of those with the relevant professional knowledge and expertise and should be based on the best available scientific and medical knowledge but must also be adapted to each country's health needs and resources
8. The regulatory framework may be published as a single document or as a series of individual documents covering specific topics or meeting the needs of specific user groups. Whatever format is used the documentation must provide all the detailed information required
9. During development of a guideline, it must be made available to relevant personnel for review and their comments must be taken into account in preparing the final document.
10. The completed guideline must be introduced to all relevant personnel by means such symposia, seminars and training courses. It should be widely distributed by appropriate means including making it readily accessible via the Internet.
11. As an essential part of risk reduction, compliance with the guideline should be rigorously monitored by periodic internal and external audit, with prompt feedback of findings to the audited institution and personnel.
12. The impact of the guideline should be evaluated periodically. Guidelines should be subject to a periodic review and should be updated according to the findings of audit and evaluation and new medical or scientific evidence. The review and updating process should enable relevant personnel to contribute their experience. A new edition or revision of a guideline should be effectively communicated to all relevant personnel.

Any comments will be appreciated and most welcome by the group and can be sent to:
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