

Meet the PLUS Authors



Originally from San Diego, CA, Baia Lasky received her medical training at the University of Illinois at Chicago and completed her Blood Banking/Transfusion Medicine fellowship training at UCLA. She worked as faculty over the transfusion medicine service and blood bank at Harbor-UCLA, a county hospital with a level 1 trauma center serving south bay Los Angeles. Baia relocated to the south in 2019 to join the American Red Cross where she serves as medical director over the Georgia and Tennessee regions. She is particularly interested in pediatric transfusion medicine, platelets and new product development. Most recently, she was on the ARC team to launch COVID convalescent plasma and is actively involved in diverse donor engagement.

Paula Saá, PhD is the Senior Director of Operational Research, Scientific Affairs in Biomedical Services at the American Red Cross. Her early career focused on the study of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies or prion diseases, with a special interest on the molecular mechanisms of prion replication and neurodegeneration and novel prion diagnostics to enable the pre-symptomatic detection of infectious prions in blood. Paula joined the American Red Cross in 2011 where she continues her work on screening methods for the detection of bloodborne pathogens, including emerging and reemerging agents, and the prevention of transfusion transmissible infections.



Whitney R. Steele, PhD, MPH is the Director of Epidemiology, Scientific Affairs at the American Red Cross. She began her career as an epidemiologist at Westat where her primary responsibilities were to the Retrovirus Epidemiology Donor Study II Coordinating Center contract working on blood donor research and survey studies. Since coming to the Red Cross in 2011, Dr. Steele has focused on epidemiologic studies monitoring transfusion-transmissible diseases in the donor population as well as projects looking at donor health, behavior and changes in donor demographics.

Bryan R. Spencer, PhD is a Research Scientist-IV in Scientific Affairs in Biomedical Services at the American Red Cross, where he has been for the past 18 years. His primary research interests include iron depletion in blood donors, infectious risks of transfusion, and risk analysis modeling related to blood safety and availability. He has participated in several recent studies documenting the prevalence and risk factors for iron depletion in US blood donors, supported by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the NIH. Dr. Spencer received his PhD in Epidemiology from Boston University School of Public Health, and his master's degrees in international health and international relations from Yale University. He has authored 45 publications and served on several expert advisory committees for the AABB and ISBT. Dr. Spencer is on the editorial board of Transfusion and has served as manuscript reviewer for 16 journals focused on transfusion medicine and infectious disease.





Laura Tonnetti, Ph.D., is a scientist IV of the Scientific Affairs in Biomedical Services at the American Red Cross. Dr. Tonnetti has been with the ARC for over 20 years, after working at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health. Her work's primary focus is on the monitoring and prevention of transfusion-transmitted infections, with emphasis on Babesia and other blood-borne parasites. She has authored several peer-reviewed papers and received the Presidential Award for Excellence from the ARC. She is a member of the ISBT Parasites working party and had served in the Transfusion Transmitted Diseases Committee of the AABB

Susan L. Stramer, PhD is currently the Vice President of Scientific Affairs in Biomedical Services at the American Red Cross where she has been for the past 24 years. Her primary interests are infectious diseases of blood, their epidemiology and interventions. She has authored over 150 peer-reviewed papers and received numerous awards including those from the Red Cross, the AABB, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health. She is a past president of the AABB and currently she is the immediate past chair of the Transfusion Transmitted Diseases Committee of the AABB.



Liz Marcus, Director Hospital Sales & Marketing, has been with the Red Cross for 13 years. She obtained her degree in Molecular Biology and Molecular Genetics at the University of Toronto and worked in several leading research laboratories. These include one in the United Kingdom (with [Sir Bruce Ponder](#) at Royal Marsden Hospital) and Canada (with [Dr. Lyanne Schlichter](#), Toronto Western Hospital) prior to transitioning to a Marketing and Product Management role with multiple biotechnology companies in the United States. Liz authored several scientific publications, is a co-inventor of two patents and is a certified project manager.