

Meet the PLUS Authors



Baia Lasky, MD serves as the medical director over the Georgia and Tennessee regions and has been with the American Red Cross since 2019. Originally from San Diego, CA, Dr. 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. She is particularly interested in pediatric transfusion medicine, platelets and new product development. Most recently, she was on the ARC team to launch COVID-19 convalescent plasma (CCP) and is actively involved in diverse donor engagement.



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



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 in the molecular mechanisms of prion replication and neurodegeneration. These interests have extended to development of 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.



Bryan R. Spencer, PhD, MPH is a Research Scientist in Scientific Affairs within Biomedical Services at the American Red Cross, where he has worked 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. Supported by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the NIH, he has participated in several recent studies documenting the prevalence and risk factors for iron depletion in US blood donors. 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.



Whitney R. Steele, PhD, MPH is the Director of Epidemiology - Scientific Affairs, at the American Red Cross. She began her career at Westat (Rockville MD) where she was an epidemiologist for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHBLI) Retrovirus Epidemiology Donor Study-II Coordinating Center. 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.



Susan L. Stramer, PhD is the Vice President of Scientific Affairs in Biomedical Services at the American Red Cross where she has served for the past 24 years. Her primary interests are infectious blood diseases, their epidemiology and interventions. Dr. Stramer obtained her PhD in Medical Microbiology and Bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin in 1984; and, completed her postdoctoral research fellowship at the CDC. She has authored over 250 peer-reviewed papers and abstracts, and has received numerous prestigious awards including the CDC's Charles C Shepard Science Award and the NIH Richard J. Davey Award and Lectureship. She has co-organized the 28th Regional Congress of the ISBT in Guangzhou Blood Center and served as Treasurer of the ISBT Working Party on Global Blood Safety. Dr. Stramer has also served as an industry representative on the FDA Blood Product Advisory Committee. She is a past president of the AABB (2012 – 2013) and served as chair of the Transfusion Transmitted Diseases Committee of the AABB.



Laura Tonnetti, PhD, is a scientist in Scientific Affairs within Biomedical Services at the American Red Cross. Dr. Tonnetti has been with the ARC for over 20 years. Prior to that, she worked at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health. Her current work is primarily focused 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.