Contents

143
Management of pregnancy complicated by anti-hrB/anti-HrB
N. Win, M. Needs, and L. Tillyer

146
An alloantibody to a high-prevalence MNS antigen in a person with a GPJL/Mk phenotype
J. Ratliff, S. Veneman, J. Ward, C. Lomas-Francis, K. Hue-Royé, R. W. Velliquette, L. Sausais, T. Maldonado,
J. Miyamoto, Y. Martin, D. Slater, and M. E. Reid

150
Plasma components: FFP, FP24, and Thawed Plasma
A. F. Eder and M. A. Sebok

158
A confusion in antibody identification: anti-D production after anti-hrB
C. Lomas-Francis, R. Yomtovian, C. McGrath, P. S. Walker, and M. E. Reid

161
Educational Forum
Warm autoantibody or drug-dependent antibody? That is the question!
S. T. Johnson

165
Consortium for Blood Group Genes (CBGG): 2007 report
M. E. Reid, C. Westhoff, G. Denomme, and L. Castilho, on behalf of the CBGG Committee

169
Communications
Thank you to contributors to the 2007 issues

170
Announcements

171
Advertisements

177
Instructions for Authors

178
Index — Volume 23, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 2007
Management of pregnancy complicated by anti-hrB/anti-HrB

N. Win, M. Needs, and L. Tillyer

Anti-hrB and anti-HrB are rare alloantibodies found predominantly in people of Black African descent. It has been assumed that strongly reacting examples of anti-hrB may cause hemolytic transfusion reactions, but precise information is limited. Anti-HrB is a clinically significant antibody and may cause hemolytic transfusion reactions and HDN. Selection of blood for transfusion support for patients with these alloantibodies, and especially with anti-HrB, imposes a special challenge in the United Kingdom. We report two antenatal patients (both patients were of the partial D phenotype DIII), one with anti-hrB, anti-Ce, and anti-D; the other, with anti-hrB and anti-D, who later formed anti-HrB. Transfusion support and the outcome of the pregnancies are discussed. A literature search confirms that, apart from some publications in abstract form, there is not much detailed clinical information available for either anti-hrB or anti-HrB. Further information and publications are warranted to gain more knowledge of these rare antibodies. Immunohematology 2007;23:143–5.

Key Words: Anti-HrB, anti-hrB, hemolytic transfusion reactions, hemolytic disease of the newborn

Patients of Black African descent with variant RHCE genes may make alloanti-e-like antibodies such as anti-hrB.1 There is scant information available regarding the clinical significance of anti-hrB, but it has been recommended that hrB- units be provided for potent anti-hrB.2 Transfusion of hrB- blood is often achieved by using R2R2 (e-, hrB-) blood. These patients may make anti-E (if E-), anti-HrB, or both.2,3 This, in turn, may lead to complications in antibody identification and provision of suitable blood. Anti-HrB is a clinically significant antibody against the high-prevalence HrB (Rh34) antigen and may cause HDN.4 We report two antenatal patients with the partial D phenotype DIII, one who made anti-hrB, anti-Ce, and anti-D, the other who made anti-hrB and anti-D, who later formed anti-HrB. Transfusion support and outcome of the pregnancies are discussed.

Case Reports

Patient 1

A 30-year-old woman of African-Caribbean origin was seen at the antenatal clinic at 19 weeks’ gestation. This was her second pregnancy. During her previous pregnancy weakly reacting anti-D, anti-Ce, and anti-hrB were identified in her serum. The International Blood Group Reference Laboratory (IBGRL), Bristol, United Kingdom, confirmed her blood group as A, probable Rh genotype Cce/DIIIce. Review of the case showed that there was no evidence of HDN during her previous pregnancy; the RBCs from her baby’s cord sample were negative in the DAT, with a Hb of 19 g/dL at delivery. The patient had not received a blood transfusion. At her initial antenatal visit for the second pregnancy, only weakly reacting anti-hrB and anti-D were identified in her serum. The patient missed her follow-up appointments, but revisited the clinic at 39 weeks’ gestation. Serologic investigation showed the presence of weakly reacting anti-hrB, anti-D, and anti-Ce. Rh phenotype r+r+ (Ce/cE) RBCs were reserved to cover the delivery. The patient delivered a normal, healthy baby by vaginal route and did not require transfusion. The DAT on the RBCs from the cord sample was negative and the baby showed no clinical evidence of HDN.

Patient 2

A 29-year-old woman of West African origin, with sickle cell anemia (HbSS), was seen at 20 weeks’ gestation. Her sickle cell disease ran a mild course. She had a history of recurrent miscarriages and had no live children. She had been transfused previously on two occasions. Three years previously, at another hospital, “pan-reacting antibodies” had been identified in her serum, and the IBGRL confirmed the presence of weakly reacting anti-D and anti-hrB. Her blood was typed as group AB and the probable Rh genotype was reported as Cce/DIIIce. At presentation in the index pregnancy, only weakly reacting anti-hrB was detected in the serum. Although the pregnancy progressed satisfactorily, she experienced sickle-related pain, leading to short admissions. Her Hb was stable at approximately 7.0 g/dL, and transfusion was avoided. It was planned to provide r+r+, K- RBCs should the patient need transfusion support. At 32 weeks’ gestation, unexpectedly,
anti-HrB was detected in her serum, resulting in the need for Rhnull or HrB– or units from a donor with the same unusual blood type. Units of HrB– RBCs would have to have been imported from South Africa. We were able to reserve two units of Rhnull RBCs at the National Frozen Blood Bank (NFBB), United Kingdom, for the patient. At 35 weeks’ gestation, the patient experienced acute sickle chest syndrome. She was treated supportively, and the infant was delivered by cesarean section under spinal anesthesia. The two frozen units of Rhnull RBCs were thawed, and transfused preoperatively and postoperatively. Her Hb the day after delivery was 7.8 g/dL. The infant’s RBCs typed as group B, D+. The DAT was positive (anti-IgG 2+, anti-C3d 1+). The infant’s Hb at delivery was 15.2 g/dL, with a bilirubin level of 157 µmol/L (normal range, 5–180 µmol/L). No therapy was required.

Materials and Methods

Column agglutination technology (DiaMed-AG, Cressier sur Morat, Switzerland) was used at National Blood Service (NBS)-Tooting Centre, using standard serologic methods. To establish whether other clinically significant alloantibodies were underlying the anti-hrB or anti-HrB present, multiple differential alloadsorption studies were undertaken with papain-treated R1R1, R2R2, and rr RBCs (NBS Reagents, Cambridge, UK).

In the serum of Patient 1, the apparent anti-Ce gave significantly more avid reactions than did the anti-hrB (i.e., more avid reactions were detected with RBCs expressing the Ce haplotype, with or without a ce haplotype in the trans position, than those expressing the ce haplotype only, even in presumed homozygous expression). Samples from both patients were referred to the IBGRL, which confirmed the presence of anti-hrB, anti-D, and anti-Ce in the serum of Patient 1 and anti-HrB in the serum of Patient 2, respectively. Extensive Rh typing was undertaken by the IBGRL for both patients.

Results

Patient 1

The RBCs of the patient were typed as group A; M+, N+, S–, s+; P1+; Lu(a–b+); K–, k+, Kp(a–b+); Le(a–b+); Fy(a–b–); and Jk(a+b–). The Rh phenotype was determined to be C+, c+, DIII, E–, e+, V–, VS+, hrB–, and hrS+. The probable genotype was Cce5/DIIIce. Anti-D, Ce, and hrB were identified in her serum.

Patient 2

The RBCs of the patient were typed as group AB; M+, N–, S+, s+; P1+; Lu(a–b+); K–, k+, Kp(a–b+); Le(a–b+); Fy(a–b–); and Jk(a+b–). The Rh phenotype was C+, Ce–, c+, DIII, E–, e+, V–, VS+, hrB–, and hrS+. Initially, weakly reacting anti-hrB was identified in her serum. Toward the end of her pregnancy, however, the patient developed a strongly reacting anti-HrB. Weakly reacting anti-D, identified in her serum in a previous pregnancy, was not detectable.

Discussion

We describe two patients with the probable Rh genotype Cce5/DIIIce and the VS+, hrB– phenotype; both formed weakly reacting anti-hrB and weakly reacting anti-D. Interestingly, with regard to Rh genotypes, Vege and Westhoff5 have postulated that the loss of expression of the hrB epitopes on RBCs may be a dominant phenotype, as they report that the majority of their hrB– donors were heterozygous, with some even carrying conventional alleles. Individuals who are hrB– often have variant D alleles.5 Patients who make anti-hrB and have a DIII partial D phenotype are at risk of making anti-D.3 Although there are no data available regarding hemolytic transfusion reactions in association with anti-hrB,1,2 the selection of hrB– RBCs has been recommended for transfusion in cases of potent anti-hrB.2 Once anti-hrB is identified, transfusion of hrB– RBCs can be achieved by providing RBCs that are R2R2 (C–, hrB–).

In the case of Patient 1, weakly reacting anti-hrB, anti-D, and anti-Ce were identified, and so r cr (cdE/cdE) RBCs were selected for transfusion support. As far as we are aware, there is only one case report of anti-hrB in pregnancy (in abstract form).6 In that study, the patient’s serum contained anti-hrB, weakly reacting anti-D, and anti-Ce (serologic findings that are similar to those seen in our Patient 1), and r cr RBCs were provided for delivery, but the patient did not require blood. The DAT on the RBCs from that infant’s cord sample was positive, and anti-hrB+D+Ce was eluted from the RBCs, with no evidence of HDN.6 In our Patient 1, the DAT on the RBCs from the cord sample was negative, with no evidence of HDN and the hospital failed to investigate the infant’s hrB type.

In our Patient 2, anti-hrB broadened into anti-HrB during the latter part of the pregnancy. Recent studies from South Africa have confirmed that anti-HrB is a clinically significant antibody that may cause HDN, and transfusion of HrB– RBCs was recommended for patients.
with anti-HrB. Provision of suitable blood for Patient 2 imposed a special challenge, as HrB- RBCs cannot be easily obtained from the existing UK donor population. There were two options, either to import extremely rare D- or DIII, HrB- RBCs from South Africa, or to provide Rhnull RBCs. We were able to locate two units of Rhnull RBCs through the UK Rare Donor Register. The patient received these Rhnull RBCs, and the transfusions were uneventful. Although the DAT on the infant’s RBCs was positive, there was no clinical evidence of HDN. The reference laboratory did not receive the infant’s sample for HrB typing. A literature search confirms that, apart from some publications in abstract form, there is not much detailed clinical information available for either anti-hrB or anti-HrB. The information obtainable from abstracts is limited, and further case reports are warranted to gain further knowledge concerning these antibodies.

Acknowledgment

We are grateful to Ms. Joyce Poole and her team at the IBGRL, Bristol, for Rh, HrB, and hrB typing and serologic confirmations.

References


An alloantibody to a high-prevalence MNS antigen in a person with a GPJL/Mk phenotype


The low-prevalence MNS blood group antigen TSEN is located at the junction of glycophorin A (GPA) to glycophorin B (GPB) in several hybrid glycophorin molecules. Extremely rare people have RBCs with a double dose of the TSEN antigen and have made an antibody to a high-prevalence MNS antigen. We report the first patient who is heterozygous for GYPJL and Mk. During prenatal tests, an alloantibody to a high-prevalence antigen was detected in the serum of a 21-year-old Hispanic woman. The antibody detected an antigen resistant to treatment by papain, trypsin, α-chymotrypsin, or DTT. The antibody was strongly reactive by the IAT with all RBCs tested except those having the M+M, GPHil/GPHil, or GPHL/GPL phenotypes. The patient’s RBCs typed M+N–S+/-s–U+, En(a+/–), Hut–, Mi(a–), Mur–, Vw–, Wr(a–b–), and were TSEN+, MINY+. Reactivity with Glycine soja suggested that her RBCs had a decreased level of sialic acid. Immunoblotting showed the presence of monomer and dimer forms of a GPA-B hybrid and an absence of GPA and GPB. Sequencing of DNA and PCR-RFLP using the restriction enzyme RsaI confirmed the presence of a hybrid GYP(A-B). The patient’s antibody was determined to be anti-EnaFR. She is the first person reported with the GPJL phenotype associated with a deletion of GYPB and GYPB in trans to GYPJL. Immunohematology 2007;23:146–9.

Key Words: MNS blood group system, glycophorin, blood groups, alloantibody, high-prevalence antigen

The antigens of the MNS blood group system are carried on glycophorin A (GPA), glycophorin B (GPB), or various hybrid molecules thereof. The antigens arise from single amino acid substitutions in GPA or GPB, the novel amino acid sequences formed at the junction of GPA to GPB or the junction of GPB to GPA, or expression of amino acids encoded by the pseudo exon of the GYPB gene.

The low-prevalence MNS RBC antigens, TSEN and MINY, are located at the junction of GPA (5’ end of GYPA exon 3) to GPB (5’ end of GYPB exon 4) in the GPA-B hybrid associated with GPHJL (Mi.XI), and in the GPHop (Mi.IV). These rearranged genes can be detected by altered RsaI restriction enzyme sites. However, these hybrid genes are not distinguished by this restriction enzyme from the hybrid genes that encode hybrid glycophorin molecules that carry Hil, namely GPHil (Mi.V), GPMur (Mi.III), GPBun (Mi.VI), and GPHF (Mi.X). TSEN+ RBCs are usually found because of a discrepant S typing or by detection of an antibody to a low-prevalence antigen. Extremely rare people have RBCs with a double dose of TSEN and have made an antibody to a high-prevalence MNS antigen. We report a person who is heterozygous for GYPJL and Mk (the null allele in the MNS system).

Case Report

We report a case of a 21-year-old group O Hispanic woman in her second pregnancy. During prenatal tests, an alloantibody to a high-prevalence antigen lacking from her RBCs was detected in her serum. The proband had no history of transfusion. Her first pregnancy ended in miscarriage for reasons unrelated to the antibody; her second pregnancy resulted in the birth of an apparently healthy baby girl whose RBCs typed as group A, D+. RBCs from the baby’s cord blood sample were positive in the DAT (3+) with anti-IgG. An eluate prepared from these RBCs was reactive with all RBCs except those of the mother. The baby’s serum also contained the antibody, albeit weakly reactive. The mother and baby were discharged the day after the baby was born, and there is no indication in the records that the baby required special care.

Material and Methods

Serologic testing of patient RBCs and serum was performed by standard tube hemagglutination. Treatment of intact RBCs with papain, trypsin, α-chymotrypsin, or 200 mM DTT; DNA extraction from WBCs; DNA sequencing; and PCR-RFLP were performed.
by standard methods. Immunoblotting of membranes prepared from RBCs was also performed by standard method under nonreducing conditions using a commercial monoclonal anti-GPA/B (E3, Sigma Biologicals, St. Louis, MO) as the primary antibody and a peroxidase-conjugated rabbit anti-mouse IgG as the secondary antibody (MP Biomedicals, Aurora, OH).

**Results**

**Hemagglutination**

The alloantibody in the proband's serum reacted strongly (4+) by the IAT with all RBCs tested, including Wr(a+b–) RBCs, but did not react with RBCs having the M^Mk (MNS null phenotype), GP^Hi/GP^Hi (Mi.V/Mi.V), or GP^JL/GP^JL (Mi.XI/Mi.XI) phenotypes, all of which are Wr(a–b–). The antigen detected by the antibody was resistant to treatment of RBCs with papain, trypsin, α-chymotrypsin, or DTT. These results are consistent with the presence of anti-EnaFR in the patient's serum. The antibody had a titer of 128 by saline-IAT. RBCs from the proband's mother, brother, and sister typed TSEN– and were strongly agglutinated (4+) by the patient's serum. Other family members were not available for testing.

The proband's RBCs typed M+N–S+/– (positive with four polyclonal and one monoclonal [MS95] anti-S, and negative with one polyclonal and one monoclonal [MS94] anti-S), s–U+, En(a+/–) (weakly positive with five and negative with four polyclonal anti-Ena), He–, Hut–, Mi(a–), Mt(a–), Mur–, Vw–, Wr(a–b–) (with two polyclonal and five monoclonal anti-Wrb), and were TSEN+, and MINY+, suggesting a GP^JL phenotype. The proband's RBCs were pedestrian with regard to other blood group antigens.

The proband's RBCs were strongly agglutinated by Glycine soja lectin, suggesting they had a decreased level of sialic acid. The results of testing the proband's RBCs with monoclonal anti-GPA directed at different epitopes on GPA (anti-GPAMSer1, anti-GPAMGly5, anti-GPA1-26, anti-GPA38-44, anti-GPA34-48, and anti-GPA49-55) suggested that the proband's RBCs express the N-terminal portion of GPA.

**Immunoblotting**

Immunoblotting of RBC membranes made from the proband's sample with monoclonal anti-GPA+GPB (E3, Sigma) showed the presence of monomer and dimer forms of a hybrid GP (A-B) and the absence of GPA and GPB (Fig. 1).

**DNA analyses**

Sequencing of genomic DNA isolated from the proband's WBCs confirmed the presence of a GYP(A-B) hybrid in which exon 3 is from GYP4 and exon 4 is from GYPB (Fig. 2). This change ablates an RsaI restriction enzyme site at nucleotide 242 (T>G) and introduces an RsaI site at nucleotide 266 (A>T). PCR-RFLP analysis after RsaI digestion gave bands of 206 bp and 145 bp for the proband's hybrid glycophorin gene, compared with bands of 182 bp and 167 bp for GYP4 (Fig. 3).

Analysis of DNA isolated from WBCs from the proband's mother, brother, and sister showed that the hybrid GYP4-GYPB gene was not present.

**Discussion**

We describe the first person with a probable GP^JL/Mk genotype who has made an alloanti-En^FR. Anti-En^a is a broad term representative of a group of antibodies that react with different epitopes on GPA, the glycoprotein carrying MN. Anti-En^a may be an
autoantibody or, as in this case, an alloantibody recognizing a portion of GPA that is altered on or lacking from the RBCs of the individual who made the antibody. The antibody present in the proband’s serum is directed at a ficin- (and papain-) resistant epitope on normal GPA close to the RBC membrane, which is lacking on her RBCs. This is in contrast to anti-En⁺FS and anti-En⁺TS, which are antibodies directed at, respectively, ficin-sensitive and trypsin-sensitive antigenic determinants at the N-terminal of this region on GPA.

The proband’s RBCs are TSEN+, MINY+ and appear to have a double dose of these antigens as a result of the presumed (based on the Glycine soja and immuno-blotting results) presence of Mₖ in trans to GYP. The S antigen on the proband’s RBCs is altered, as would be expected, because her RBCs are TSEN+. The Wr(b–) status of her RBCs is also expected because, although Wrᵇ is associated with a point mutation on band 3, Wrᵇ expression requires the presence of amino acid residues 59 to 76 of GPA that are lacking from RBCs with a double dose of GP.JL and GP.Hil.¹¹,¹² This explains why previously reported cases of individuals homozygous for genes encoding GP.JL (M.I) were described as having anti-Wrᵇ, anti-Wrᵇ/EnᵃFR, or mixtures thereof in their serum.⁷,⁸,¹³ Indeed, anti-Wrᵇ is an anti-EnᵃFR. However, not all anti-EnᵃFR are anti-Wrᵇ, and there is heterogeneity in these antibodies.

The altered RsαI sites provide a means to perform PCR-RFLP analysis to detect the genes encoding TSEN and Hil.

The baby appeared to be unaffected by the mother’s antibody, and it is tempting to speculate that the difference in ABO type (mother group O, baby group A) may have had a protective effect.

Acknowledgments

We thank the patient’s mother, brother, and sister for their cooperation, and Robert Ratner for help with preparing the manuscript and figures.
References

Attention: State Blood Bank Meeting Organizers
If you are planning a state meeting and would like copies of Immunohematology for distribution, please contact Cindy Flickinger, Managing Editor, 4 months in advance, by fax or e-mail at (215) 451-2538 or flickingerc@usa.redcross.org.
Plasma components: FFP, FP24, and Thawed Plasma

A.F. Eder and M.A. Sebok

A rose is a rose, is a rose . . . Gertrude Stein

Plasma intended for transfusion is separated from whole blood or collected by apheresis procedures and frozen according to specific requirements defined by the method of preparation (Table 1).1-3 Fresh frozen plasma (FFP) and plasma frozen within 24 hours of phlebotomy (FP24) differ in the amount of time that is allowed to elapse between collection and frozen storage, which has practical ramifications not only for blood establishments whose collection sites are geographically remote from their manufacturing facilities but also for transfusion services that are often asked about the properties and proper handling of the differently labeled plasma components.

With the time constraints imposed on producing FFP, and the additional demand for plasma collected from male donors for transfusion to mitigate the risk of transfusion-related acute lung injury (TRALI), many blood centers have increased production of FP24. Despite the increasing or exclusive use of FP24 by many hospitals in recent years, questions persist regarding its use in clinical practice, perhaps reflecting deeply ingrained practice or familiarity with FFP at some hospitals, a belief that “fresh is better,” or concern about the unfavorable past experiences with other plasma components such as solvent-detergent (SD) plasma in the United States. Although clinical trials have not been performed to compare the efficacy of FP24 with that of FFP, the available in vitro data on the concentration or functional activity of coagulation factors in the plasma components support the use of FP24 and Thawed Plasma for the common and currently accepted indications for plasma transfusion.

Description

FFP and FP24 are U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-licensed products as defined in 21 CFR 640.34(a) and (b).3 FFP is prepared from a whole blood or apheresis collection and frozen at -18°C or colder within the time frame required for the anticoagulant or collection process (Table 1). FFP derived from whole blood in CPDA-1, CPD, and CP2D anticoagulant must be separated and placed at -18°C within 8 hours of collection. FFP from apheresis procedures is collected in ACD or sodium citrate anticoagulant and must be placed in the freezer within 6 to 8 hours according to manufacturers’ instructions. Most apheresis collection sets are closed or functionally closed systems, but some are open systems, which affects the suitability of converting apheresis FFP to Thawed Plasma (discussed in greater detail in a later section). Licensed FP24 can only be prepared from whole blood and must be placed at -18°C within 24 hours after phlebotomy. The FDA has not yet approved using plasma collected by apheresis procedures for FP24.

The FDA has no finished product quality control requirements for FFP or FP24, provided that the manufacturing, transporting, and storage specifications for time and temperature are met. International standards for final product specifications for frozen plasma components differ. The Council of Europe guidelines specify FFP as being frozen within 8 hours of phlebotomy to -70°C and containing more than 0.70 IU/mL (70%) factor VIII (FVIII) activity. In contrast, the United Kingdom Blood Transfusion Service no longer defines the interval between collection and storage for frozen plasma, provided the quality control specification is achieved.4,5 The requirement for standard UK FFP is at least 75 percent of the units contain more than 70 IU/mL of FVIII.4,5 Interestingly, lower clotting factor activity (> 50 IU/mL) is accepted for the SD-treated FFP commercially available in Europe, which implicitly sets the lower limit of the normal range as a minimal, clinically acceptable standard that most of the units produced should meet.

As reviewed herein, the vast majority of units of FFP and FP24 contain levels of all clotting factors and inhibitor activity that are above the lower limit of the normal range (≥ 0.50 IU/mL or 50% factor activity) at

150 IMMUNOHEMATOLOGY, VOLUME 23, NUMBER 4, 2007
IMMUNOHEMATOLOGY, VOLUME 23, NUMBER 4, 2007

Expiration, suggesting that additional quality control specifications are unnecessary and unwarranted.

Labeling and Managing FFP and FP24 After Thawing

After being thawed and stored at 1° to 6°C for 24 hours, plasma can no longer be labeled as FFP or FP24, but most units can be converted to Thawed Plasma.6 First introduced in the 17th edition of AABB Standards, the expiration dating on Thawed Plasma was extended from 24 hours to 5 days. Thawed Plasma is derived from either FP24 or FFP that has been prepared in a closed system and can be stored for up to 5 days at 1° to 6°C.2 After the 24-hour expiration for FP24 or FFP, the original license number on the unit should be removed and the product relabeled as Thawed Plasma. Alternatively, FP24 or FFP can be relabeled as Thawed Plasma once thawed and placed at 1° to 6°C, rather than waiting until expiration.

Some hospitals, especially trauma centers, maintain an inventory of Thawed Plasma to avoid the delays in plasma delivery to patients associated with thawing FFP or FP24. Because Thawed Plasma currently has a maximum shelf life of 5 days after the initial thawing, the benefit of maintaining a quickly accessible inventory to treat trauma cases must be weighed against the possible increase in outdating of thawed units. Managing a Thawed Plasma inventory also requires knowledge of the method of collection used by the blood supplier for FFP. Some apheresis collection sets are open systems (e.g., Baxter Auto-C; Table 1), and the resultant FFP cannot be converted to Thawed Plasma after 24 hours (see Thawed Plasma).
intent to possibly store the Thawed Plasma for more than 24 hours. This obstacle will be eliminated with the implementation of ISBT 128, because the method of collection will be evident in the labeling of the unit of FFP (Table 1). Licensed FP24 is currently only prepared from whole blood collections and not apheresis procedures, so there are no special considerations in converting units to Thawed Plasma.

**Indications for Plasma Transfusion**

Plasma transfusion is indicated to treat preoperative or bleeding patients who require replacement of multiple plasma coagulation factors, such as patients with liver disease or disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC). Acquired coagulation factor deficiencies may also result from massive transfusion through dilution or warfarin therapy, which decreases the vitamin K–dependent factors (FII, FVII, FIX, FX, protein C, protein S). Plasma transfusion may be indicated to reverse the effect of warfarin in bleeding patients or patients at significant risk of bleeding during invasive procedures whenever time does not permit reversal of warfarin anticoagulation with vitamin K administration. Finally, plasma is often lifesaving for patients with thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP) who are deficient in ADAMTS13 (von Willebrand factor [vWF]-cleaving protease) activity. As contraindications, FFP and FP24 should never be given to FVIII-deficient patients, or any patient with known hereditary coagulation deficiencies for whom specific clotting factor concentrates are available. An international registry of commercially available clotting factor concentrates is maintained by the International Society on Thrombosis and Hemostasis.7

In a population of healthy adults, plasma coagulation factor and inhibitor activity occur within a wide reference range (0.50–1.50 U/mL; 50–150% factor activity), reflecting normal biologic variability. The heterogeneity observed for some clotting factors is linked to blood group and race. Plasma collected from group O individuals contains less vWF and FVIII than plasma collected from group A individuals, and Caucasians generally have lower levels than African Americans.8 This interindividual variability should be taken into account when evaluating the factor activity in plasma components collected from healthy volunteer blood donors. For example, a unit of FP24 collected from a group A individual could have more vWF:VIIIIC at expiration than a unit of FFP prepared from a group O individual; yet both products are clinically acceptable.

Many patients who require plasma transfusion have normal or high levels of FVIII, because it is an acute phase protein and is often increased by liver disease and other common inflammatory diseases. Individual coagulation proteins and inhibitors also demonstrate maturation during infancy and childhood, with most factors reaching adult levels by 6 months of age in both term and preterm infants.9,10 Notably, the level of FVIII at birth is the same as for an adult, even in premature infants, but the vitamin K–dependent factors and coagulation inhibitors fall below the lower limit of the reference range for adults. Despite these differences, healthy infants are not coagulopathic, and the levels reflect the normal hemostatic balance for the developmental stage. Consequently, the same considerations apply to infants being given plasma transfusion for acquired multiple coagulation factor deficiencies and related clinical indications as for adults.

Plasma transfusion is typically given as 10 to 20 mL/kg and expected to deliver a hemostatic dose of coagulation factors and inhibitors. The minimum levels of coagulation factors required to maintain hemostasis (e.g., 50 mg/dL fibrinogen; 15–30 % factor activity) are about 3- to 10-fold below the amount normally present in healthy adults. Plasma containing physiologic amounts (e.g., ≥ 0.50 IU/mL) of coagulation proteins will increase deficient clotting factor activity to at least 30 percent in patients with acquired coagulopathy when dosed appropriately. The biologic variability that is observed in the normal content of plasma products does not affect the clinical effectiveness of the product. Similarly, FFP, FP24, and Thawed Plasma used at 5 days retain sufficient functional content during production and storage to deliver a hemostatic dose that is expected to correct acquired coagulation defects.11–17

**Functional Content of Plasma Components**

The relative functional protein content of FFP, FP24, and Thawed Plasma is affected by the method of preparation, temperature, and duration of storage. The 2002 Circular of Information states that FP24 contains reduced amounts of FV compared with FFP, but several studies have demonstrated minimal or no reductions in the levels of FV and other plasma clotting factors and inhibitors, with the exception of FVIII, which is reduced by 16 to 24 percent (Table 2). The 2002 Circular of Information is currently under revision and is expected to clarify this point.

FV and FVIII in plasma or whole blood are retained to variable degrees in different studies under the
conditions used to prepare FFP and FP24 (Table 2). Smith et al.\textsuperscript{11} compared the effect of extending the storage time from 8 hours to 24 hours on the level of labile coagulation factors in plasma derived from CPD-whole blood held at 1° to 6°C. Their results showed no significant changes in FV, vWF:Ag, FIX, and ristocetin activity at the different times, but there was a statistically significant decrease (16%) in FVIII activity at 24 hours compared with 8 hours. The level of FVIII activity, however, at 24 hours (76%) was still above the lower limit of the reference range. O’Neill et al.\textsuperscript{12} evaluated the coagulation activity in whole blood stored for 24 hours at 4°C before separation into plasma. At expiration after thawing (24 hours), FP24 contained an average of 64 percent FVIII activity, whereas FFP contained an average of 84 percent, a reduction of 24 percent. Cardigan et al.\textsuperscript{13} also evaluated coagulation factor activity in whole blood stored overnight (18–24 hours) at 4°C before separation into plasma, and likewise observed a 23 percent reduction in FVIIIC, but reported that the vast majority of units (98%) were within the same range as for 8-hour plasma (0.40 to 1.60 IU/mL).

The activity of coagulation factors in Thawed Plasma from FFP is stable for 5 days at 1° to 6°C, except for FVIII which is reduced by 35 to 41 percent at expiration.\textsuperscript{14} Thawed Plasma on day 5 had on average 41 to 63 percent FVIII activity, depending on ABO blood group.\textsuperscript{14} The relative amounts of coagulation factor and inhibitor activity in Thawed Plasma on day 5 prepared from whole blood or apheresis collections compared with FFP are shown in Table 3. Plasma collected by apheresis has slightly higher factor levels than plasma prepared from whole blood collection, likely because of less anticoagulant dilution, lower citrate concentrations, earlier mean freezing times, or differences in laboratory assays.\textsuperscript{15} This tendency, however, may explain the lower observed decreases in factor activity with Thawed Plasma prepared from apheresis FFP compared with whole blood FFP.\textsuperscript{15}

The factor content of Thawed Plasma prepared from FP24 throughout the 5-day storage period has not been reported, although Nifong et al.\textsuperscript{18} measured the coagulant activity in thawed FP24 stored under less...

### Table 2. Effect of FFP and FP24 processing conditions on FV and FVIII activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>FFP conditions 8 hours, 4°C</th>
<th>FFP conditions 24 hours, 4°C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (%) (SD or 2 SD range)</td>
<td>Mean % (SD or 2 SD range) % units in FFP reference range Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>98.6 (3.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>94 (55–148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FVIII:C</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>89.8 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>84 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vWF activity</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>103.3 (18.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>101 (57–163)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD = standard deviation

### Table 3. Relative factor activity in FP24, Thawed Plasma, and SD plasma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FV</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FX</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FVII</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FVIII</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIX</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FXI</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vWF activity</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein C (U/dL)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein S (U/dL)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATIII</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>α2-Antiplasmin (plasmin inhibitor)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAMTS13 activity</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAMTS13 activity * [Ref 16]</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Differences are expressed as a percentage decrease or increase (+) in mean factor activity compared with FFP or other standard, as indicated; (–), not reported.
† Day 5 compared with day 1
‡ SD, solvent/detergent-treated plasma, compared with untreated plasma
favorable conditions (i.e., 20°C rather than 1° to 6°C). The average FVIII activity measured in 15 units of FP24 stored at 20°C was 59 percent on day 5, which was decreased by 34 percent compared with the activity on day 1 of storage, but was still within the normal reference range for human plasma.

Scott et al.16 compared the ADAMTS13 activity in therapeutic plasma components used in the treatment of TTP (Table 3). FP24 and FFP as well as Thawed Plasma at 5 days all had equivalent ADAMTS13 activity, which was stable under the different processing and storage conditions.

In summary, the levels of coagulation factors and inhibitors in FP24 are minimally or not different compared with those of FFP, with the exception of FVIII, which is variably reduced by about 16 to 23 percent. For comparison, the functional effect of solvent-detergent treatment on plasma is included in Table 3 because of the striking difference in anticoagulant proteins in SD plasma compared with FP24 and FFP.18,19 The SD process reduces transmission of lipid-enveloped viruses but also adversely affects the amount of protein S and plasmin inhibitor in the final product, causing a 51 percent and 76 percent loss in activity, respectively.19 The reduced coagulation factor and inhibitor levels did not impair efficacy of SD-plasma in clinical studies, but likely accounted for the uncommon but serious adverse events associated with its use.20–25 Thrombotic complications in several patients with TTP undergoing plasma exchange with SD-plasma were attributed to depletion of protein S; excessive bleeding and fibrinolytic complications described in patients undergoing liver transplant were attributed to lower levels of plasmin inhibitor in the group treated with SD-plasma compared with SD-plasma.22,24,25 In the United States, SD-plasma was linked to the deaths of six patients who experienced thrombotic events or excessive bleeding during orthotopic liver transplantation.23 SD-plasma is no longer commercially available in the United States, but is presently an approved product in Europe for all of the same indications as FFP (Octaplas, Octapharma, Vienna, Austria). Interestingly, the risk of TRALI may be potentially lower for SD-plasma than for FFP and FP24 because it is prepared from pools of plasma from 500 to 1600 donors, although a difference has not been substantiated.

In conclusion, FFP, FP24, and Thawed Plasma can be safely used to effectively treat the coagulopathy of liver disease, TTP, and DIC, to reverse the effect of warfarin, and to manage massive traumatic blood loss. Most units of FFP and FP24 contain coagulation factor activity within the normal reference range, and even Thawed Plasma on day 5 retains sufficient levels of coagulation factor activity to deliver a hemostatic dose of all factors except, in some cases, FVIII. Being an acute phase protein, however, FVIII is not deficient in many patients who are candidates for plasma transfusion. If there is clinical concern about the relative degree of FVIII deficiency in the setting of multiple clotting factor deficits, the use of Thawed Plasma should be carefully considered or its use should be limited to the first few days of storage.14 In contrast, Bostrom et al.26 have proposed extending storage of Thawed Plasma to 14 days for clinical use, despite the observed mean 25 percent and 50 percent decrease in FV and FVIII levels, respectively.

Utilization Trends in the United States

In the United States, the use of FFP and FP24 has changed with time and varies across the country. A recent review of monthly transfusable plasma shipments to hospital customers by the American Red Cross (ARC) from July 1, 2005, to March 31, 2007, showed a shift in the percentage of hospital customers using predominantly (defined as > 80% of the plasma distributed to the hospital) FP24 from 31 percent of hospital customers in the second half of 2005 to 45 percent of hospital customers in the first quarter of 2007 (Fig. 1). Conversely, the percentage of hospital customers using predominantly FFP decreased from 59 percent in the second half of 2005 to 45 percent of hospital customers in the first quarter of 2007 (Fig. 1).

In addition to a progressive shift in overall distributions from FFP to FP24, the number of geographic regions using predominantly FP24 increased 63 percent in this time period. By March 2007, FP24 accounted for more than 90 percent of the transfusable plasma shipments in 13 of the 35 ARC regions. These regions represented shipments to 657 hospitals in 23
states and the District of Columbia in March 2007. The percentage of hospitals using any FP24 increased from 52 percent to 69 percent; in contrast, the percentage of hospitals transfusing exclusively FFP decreased from 48 percent to 31 percent during the study period (Table 4).

The temporal trends in plasma component use in the community indicate the general acceptance of the therapeutic equivalence of FP24 and FFP for most indications, as supported by the in vitro studies of functional coagulation activity and protein levels in plasma components. Thawed Plasma is not an FDA-licensed plasma component, and the extent of its use in the community has not been assessed.

Audits of Plasma Use in the United States

The United States transfuses far more plasma than European countries, both on a per capita basis and when normalized for RBC use.27,28 The United States was second only to Germany in the per capita usage of FFP among seven European countries in one survey,27,28 and the ratio of FFP to RBC use in the United States was 1:3.6 compared with 1:6.0 in Europe.28

Audits of transfusion practice in American hospitals have demonstrated the overuse and misuse of plasma. Dzik and Rao29 evaluated the usage of FFP at Massachusetts General Hospital for 3 months in 2003, and found that 31 percent of the orders for FFP were to correct an abnormal coagulation test result (i.e., international normalized ratio [INR]) before an invasive procedure. Several studies have shown, however, that plasma transfusion does not correct mildly elevated coagulation tests most of the time, and the preoperative prothrombin time to INR values do not predict postsurgical bleeding.30,31 Given the risks associated with plasma transfusion, including TRALI, as well as the cost of maintaining a safe and adequate supply of transfusable plasma, the AABB recently emphasized the importance of appropriate evidence-based hemotherapy practices to minimize unnecessary transfusion.32 Clinical trials have been initiated to better define appropriate plasma transfusion practice.33

Conclusions

The levels of coagulation factors and inhibitors in FP24 are minimally or not different when compared with FFP, with the exception of FVIII, which is variably reduced by about 16 to 23 percent but remains above the lower limit of the reference range in most units. Thawed Plasma throughout the 5-day storage period has progressive and more pronounced loss of FVIII activity, and decreased levels of all other factors except fibrinogen, yet still retains sufficient factor activity for clinical use. FFP and FP24 are considered by many to be therapeutically equivalent choices for the common and accepted indications for plasma transfusion. Thawed Plasma prepared either from FFP (if collected in a closed system) or from FP24 is also an acceptable component to treat patient coagulopathy of liver disease, TTP, and DIC and to reverse the effect of warfarin when clinically indicated.

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A confusion in antibody identification: anti-D production after anti-hrB

C. LOMAS-FRANCIS, R. YOMTOVIAN, C. MCGRATH, P.S. WALKER, AND M.E. REID

It is well known that certain combinations of alloantibodies are frequently found together. Patients with sickle cell disease (SCD) are mostly of African ancestry, and they may make anti-hrB. A transfusion of hrB- blood is often achieved by using e- (R2R2) RBCs; it is generally believed that hrB- patients readily make anti-E or a “broad-spectrum” anti-Rh34 (HrB). We describe two multiply transfused D+ patients with SCD and a history of anti-hrB who subsequently produced anti-D. This raises the question whether anti-hrB together with anti-D is a more common antibody combination than anti-hrB with anti-E or anti-Rh34. Immunohematology 2007;23:158–60.

Key Words: alloantibody, blood group incompatibility, crossmatch, Rh blood group system

It is well known by immunohematologists that certain combinations of alloantibodies are frequently found together, for example, anti-C with anti-e; anti-E with anti-c; and anti-Lea with anti-Leb. Patients of African ancestry with sickle cell disease (SCD) often require chronic transfusion therapy, and they may have variant antigens that make them prone to produce unusual antibody combinations. For example, patients with variant RHCE genes may make alloanti-e-like antibodies, including anti-hrB. After anti-hrB has been identified, transfusion of hrB- blood is often achieved by using e- (R2R2) RBC components because haplotypes that lack e are hrB-, and such blood is more readily available than e+, hrB- blood.1 However, it is generally believed that these patients readily make anti-E with or without a “broad-spectrum” anti-Rh34 (HrB).2,3 If such patients receive frequent transfusions, additional antibodies are likely to be formed, making antibody identification and finding compatible blood complicated. We describe here two multiply transfused D+ patients with SCD and a history of anti-hrB (plus other alloantibodies) who subsequently made anti-D. As certain D variant haplotypes are often associated with hrB- haplotypes,3,4 this raises the question as to whether anti-hrB together with anti-D in D+ patients, is a more common combination than anti-hrB with anti-E or anti-Rh34.

Case Reports

Patient 1

An African American woman with clinical sepsis and a history of SCD β-thalassemia was admitted for the surgical removal or drainage of a left subphrenic abscess. Although her baseline Hct level was normally 30% to 36%, her admission Hct was 18.9%. Before admission, she was known to be D+ and to have anti-hrB, E, M, and a warm autoantibody. A sample was submitted to the American Red Cross Northern Ohio Region Reference Laboratory. It was determined that the patient’s serum contained the previously identified anti-hrB and anti-E; however, the previously detected anti-M and warm autoantibody were no longer detectable. Attempts were made to obtain compatible blood, including the procurement of D- units. Because of the urgency to proceed with surgery and the unavailability of hrB- units, least incompatible blood was selected to support this patient in the perioperative period. She received two units of crossmatch compatible and four units of crossmatch incompatible blood on the day after transfusion. During the following 12 days, her Hct stabilized at 30% to 35%. Surgery was delayed because the patient was clinically stable on broad-spectrum antibiotic therapy. On the 13th day after transfusion, her Hct precipitously fell to 20%. During the next 5 days, despite transfusion of six least incompatible units, including one that was E-, hrB-, her Hct further declined to 13%. Her reticulocyte count diminished to essentially zero, and a bone marrow aspiration performed at this time demonstrated pure RBC aplasia. When D+, hrB-, and D-- RBC components were subsequently obtained, they were strongly incompatible with the patient’s posttransfusion serum, thereby ruling out the possibility of anti-E and anti-Rh34 as the sole additional specificities. Repeat testing of her posttransfusion serum revealed 4+ reactivity with the antibody screening RBCs. The
patient’s RBCs were positive in the DAT with anti-IgG. A sample was investigated for the possible development of an additional antibody to a high-prevalence antigen. In a selected RBC panel, R_{null}; D-, hr^{b-}; and some D+, hr^{b-} RBCs that lacked the other relevant antigens were compatible. Because DIIIa RBCs are frequently hr^{b-} (and VS+),\(^1\) patients who make anti-hr^{b} are likely to have the DIIIa phenotype and be at risk of making anti-D. Thus, we considered the possibility that the patient had made anti-D. The compatible D+, hr^{b-} RBCs were either D-, or were determined by DAK typing (they were DAK+)\(^6\) and by DNA (prepared from WBCs) analysis using PCR-RFLP as described\(^6,7\) to have the partial D phenotype, DIIIa. Anti-D made by a DIIIa person does not react with DIIIa RBCs and explains the compatibility of some D+, hr^{b-} RBCs. Transfusion was withheld from the patient for 1 week, during which time her Hct remained less than 15%. An episode of chest pain prompted the transfusion of a D-, E-, hr^{b-} compatible RBC component slowly in two aliquots. After this transfusion her Hct stabilized at 20%. During the next 3 weeks her reticulocyte count increased to 10%, and she achieved a Hct of 30% with no further transfusion therapy.

**Patient 2**

An African American man with SCD was admitted to the hospital with low hemoglobin and hematocrit levels and a painful sickle cell crisis. His serum was known to contain anti-hr^{b}, -C, -E, and -K. He had received transfusions on multiple occasions before his serum strongly agglutinated some RBCs lacking these antigens. Attempts to locate compatible blood were unsuccessful. When tested with a panel of hr^{b-} RBC samples that lacked C, E, and K, his serum did not agglutinate eight samples (one of these samples was E+) and did agglutinate four samples (two of which were E+). One of the eight nonreactive samples was D-. It was shown that the compatible D+ samples and the patient’s RBCs were DIIIa. With the experience that had been gained from Patient 1, anti-D was quickly identified in this patient’s serum.

**Discussion**

Given the reputed immunogenicity of D, it surprised us that these patients produced anti-D after anti-hr^{b} and other alloantibodies. One explanation for this unexpected result is that the patients with a partial D on their RBCs produce an anti-D to a part, but not all, of D. In both cases presented here, many transfusions of D+, hr^{b-} RBCs (including R_{2R2}) were tolerated before anti-D was produced. The partial D phenotype, DIIIa, which may be present in approximately 4 percent of Americans with African ancestry,\(^6\) is not readily identified because DIIIa RBCs are strongly agglutinated by reagent and single-clone monoclonal anti-D. The presence of anti-D may not be readily apparent when a panel of D+, hr^{b-} RBCs is tested because some, but not all, may be DIIIa. DNA analysis has shown that altered RHCE genes are often in cis with genes encoding partial D phenotypes.\(^4,5\) Thus, patients whose RBCs possess a partial D phenotype with a partial e phenotype can type positive for these antigens and have an alloantibody apparently of the same specificity, that is D+ with alloanti-D, and e+ with alloanti-e. This can dramatically complicate antibody identification, as well as our ability to provide compatible blood components to such patients. It is important to remember that providing compatible blood components for patients with anti-e-like antibodies can be confounded by the presence of anti-D, and that a panel of RBCs lacking a high-prevalence e-variant antigen (such as hr^{b}) is likely to include some RBCs with a partial D phenotype. Thus, the pattern of reactivity will not be that expected for anti-D. In these patients, reactivity with R_{2R2} RBCs may be attributable to anti-D and not anti-E or anti-Rh34. We have since tested other patients whose serum first contained anti-e-like antibodies and then anti-D, which shows that in certain patients this phenomenon is not especially rare. When testing serum from patients of African ancestry, think anti-D!

Providing blood for transfusion to patients with complex serologic problems has always been challenging; however, providing blood for the patients described in this paper is particularly difficult. They require unique antigen combinations that are found only in donors of African descent. A nationwide search in the United States for blood for Patient 2 failed to identify any compatible donors. Hemoglobin substitutes might be useful in these cases, but they are rarely available for compassionate use, and none is currently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Because the only reagent RBCs that were serologically compatible with the patient had been received on a RBC exchange from South Africa, the blood center in Durban, South Africa, was contacted. They generously provided two units of blood from one of the compatible donors; however, there is an ongoing concern that such blood should not be used because the blood center in South Africa had not performed nucleic acid testing for viral markers.
The practice of prophylactically matching patients with SCD for Rh and K is widespread; however, such matching would not prevent this infrequent type of alloimmunization. Patients, as described in these case studies, who have partial Rh antigens will likely type D+, even though they are at risk of being sensitized to anti-D. Because the Rh phenotype that is compatible with these patients can only be found in donors of African ancestry, an ongoing effort to recruit, type, and retain these minority donors must become a priority in the nation's blood centers.

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We dedicate this paper to Ragnhild Øyen (deceased January 2007), whose insightful analysis of the data and antibody identification skills were instrumental in solving these cases. We are grateful to Robert Ratner for preparation of the manuscript. We also thank Elizabeth Smart of the South African National Blood Service, East Coast Region, for providing two units of compatible blood for Patient 2.

References


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Warm autoantibody or drug-dependent antibody? That is the question!

S.T. Johnson

Clinical Case Presentation

Two units of leukocyte-reduced red blood cells (LRBCs) were ordered for a 58-year-old Caucasian woman whose hemoglobin was falling. She had undergone a cholecystectomy 2 weeks earlier. Her laboratory test results are noted in Table 1.

Immunohematologic Evaluation and Results

Results of initial pretransfusion testing showed her RBCs to be group O, D+. An antibody detection test performed by gel technology was positive (2+) with both reagent screening RBCs. An antibody identification panel was also tested by gel and similar positive reactivity (2+) was seen with all panel RBCs. The hospital technologist performed a DAT by the gel test. This was positive (4+) with anti-IgG while the saline control was negative. The cards available at the hospital did not include polyspecific antihuman globulin (AHG) or anti-C3. At this point, the hospital technologist performing the testing was convinced that this patient had a warm autoantibody and sent a sample to the Immunohematology Reference Laboratory (IRL) for further evaluation to determine whether the patient had any underlying alloantibodies. The clinician was informed of the serologic results and that there would be a delay in obtaining blood because the patient’s sample was being sent out.

Panel positive reactions with equal reactivity are most likely the result of an autoantibody or an alloantibody to a high-prevalence antigen present on all reagent RBCs tested. An autologous control will help differentiate an autoantibody from an alloantibody. If the autologous control is negative, one is most likely dealing with an antibody to a high-prevalence antigen, but if positive with equal or stronger reactivity (2+ to 4+), an autoantibody is most likely. Alternatively or in addition to the autologous control, a DAT may be performed. This may be the method chosen in laboratories routinely using gel or solid phase for antibody detection and identification. It is important to remember, however, that the autologous control and DAT are different tests. An autologous control includes patient serum whereas a DAT only tests patient RBCs. In most cases, if the DAT is positive, the autologous control will also be positive. If the patient’s RBCs are sensitized with IgG or C3 in vivo, the autologous control will be positive because this occurred before incubation. However, there are situations when only the autologous control will be positive because the antibody reactivity is method-dependent. The IgG coating of patient RBCs in this case suggests a warm autoantibody.

Underlying alloantibodies are reported in 12 to 40 percent of patients with warm autoantibodies.1 Review of the patient’s clinical history showed she had received a transfusion of two units of RBCs 20 years earlier, and she delivered three children.

The results obtained in the IRL using test tube methods are in Table 2.

According to this IRL’s policy, an enzyme-treated (ficin) antibody identification panel is first tested when a warm autoantibody is suspected. Patient RBCs are treated with ZZAP (ficin and DTT) before performing
an autologous adsorption. Alternatively, if allogeneic adsorptions are performed, these reagent RBCs are pretreated with ficin. Initial screening of a ficin-treated panel ensures that the autoantibody is directed against an antigen present on ficin-treated RBCs, and, therefore, adsorptions should be effective. The ficin panel was 3+ with all RBCs, and the autologous control was 4+ reactive. Enhanced reactivity is consistent with a warm autoantibody.

Results of the test tube DATs performed in the IRL are in Table 3. It is important to include a control to rule out spontaneous agglutination when positive reactivity is seen with all reagents.

The strongly positive DAT with IgG and complement (C3b, C3d) is most likely caused by a warm autoantibody, especially in light of the serum results. Approximately 50 percent of positive DATs in patients with warm autoimmune hemolytic anemia (WAIHA) show both IgG and complement coating the RBCs.1

In an effort to ensure that blood was available as quickly as possible for this patient, the IRL technologist started autologous adsorptions because the patient had not been recently transfused. One milliliter of RBCs was saved for the eluate. While the patient’s serum was incubating at 37°C with the first set of the patient’s ZZAP-treated RBCs, a rapid acid eluate (ELU-KIT II, ImmucorGamma, Inc., Norcross, GA) was performed. To the technologist’s surprise, the eluate was negative!

The IRL technologist performing the work immediately called the referring institution to notify them of the results of the eluate. A negative eluate is highly suggestive of a drug-dependent antibody. Drug-dependent antibodies will not react, even if eluted from patient RBCs, because the putative drug must be present when testing the eluate with reagent RBCs. Were the DAT positive because of a warm autoantibody, strongly positive reactions (2+ to 4+) would be obtained when testing the eluate.

In a recent report summarizing the experience of this author’s laboratory, more than half of the cases of drug-induced immune hemolytic anemia (DIHIA) investigated demonstrated reactivity in initial antibody detection tests.2 Serologic results in this case could easily be misconstrued as a warm autoantibody. Positive reactivity without adding drug to the test may have two explanations. If the patient is on the drug at the time of testing, the drug is likely circulating in the patient’s plasma. Alternatively, a drug-independent warm autoantibody may be present. It is possible that drug-independent autoantibody reactivity may resemble reactivity seen when a patient experiences a delayed transfusion reaction and is producing not only

| Table 2. Antibody identification panel*: results of testing serum from the patient |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cell | Rh | MNS | Lu | P | Lewis | Kell | Duffy | Kidd | Saline |
| Cell | D | C | E | c | e | f | M | N | S | s | Lu a | Lu b | P L e a | L e b | K | k | F y a | F y b | J K a | J K b | IS | 37°C IAT |
| 1 | + | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | + | + | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2+ |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | + | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 1+ |
| 3 | 0 | 0 | + | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 1+ |
| 4 | + | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | + | 0 | 2+ |
| 5 | 0 | 0 | + | + | + | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 1+ |
| 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | 2+ |
| 7 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 1+ |
| 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | + | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 1+ |
| 9 | + | + | 0 | + | + | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 1+ |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | + | + | 0 | 0 | + | + | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 1+ |
| 11 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 1+ |
| 12 | AC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4+ |

AC = autologous control
* In-house prepared RBC panel
† Anti-IgG, ImmucorGamma, Inc., Norcross, GA

| Table 3. DAT results |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| IS | 10 min. RT incubation |
| Polyspecific AHG* | 4+ | NT |
| Anti-IgG† | 4+ | NT |
| Anti-C3b,C3d‡ | 1+ | 2+ |
| Saline control | 0 | 0 |

IS = initial spin, RT = room temperature, NT = not tested
*Polyspecific AHG, Ortho Clinical-Diagnostics, Inc., Raritan, NJ
†Anti-IgG, ImmucorGamma, Inc.
‡Anti-C3b,C3d, ImmucorGamma, Inc.
Warm autoantibody or drug-dependent antibody?

This patient was receiving Zosyn (Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Philadelphia, PA) 2 g intravenously every 6 hours. Zosyn is a broad-spectrum antibiotic consisting of piperacillin sodium in combination with the β-lactamase inhibitor tazobactam sodium. Arndt et al. and Johnson et al. reported patients with DIIHA caused primarily by piperacillin antibodies. Johnson et al. later reported four cases associated with Zosyn. Drug-dependent antibody was detected in the presence of both Zosyn and piperacillin; however, reactivity was greater with Zosyn.

Drug studies were performed testing the patient’s serum in the presence of the drugs Zosyn, piperacillin, and tazobactam because recent reports have shown that Zosyn- and piperacillin-dependent antibodies react best in this method. The results are in Table 4.

Although there are weakly positive reactions with the patient’s serum and PBS, reactivity is significantly increased in the presence of both Zosyn and piperacillin, consistent with drug-dependent antibodies. In addition, the eluate was positive in the presence of both Zosyn and piperacillin.

Finally, autologous adsorptions removed the antibody reactivity and no underlying alloantibodies were detected in the adsorbed serum.

Conclusions

Zosyn- and piperacillin-dependent antibodies were detected in the patient’s serum. Had all testing for drug-dependent antibodies been negative, repeating the tests using enzyme- (ficon or papain) treated reagent RBCs may have enhanced the reaction with the drug-dependent antibody. Had testing continued to yield negative results, it may have been beneficial to treat RBCs with each drug and then test the drug-coated RBCs. If there is clear evidence of hemolysis as in this case, testing by several methods may be required to detect a drug-dependent antibody. As with common RBC alloantibodies, drug-dependent antibodies do not “read the book.” One can never be certain when the next type of drug-dependent antibody may be identified!

The use of Zosyn was discontinued, and the patient’s hemoglobin stabilized after two units of LRBCs were administered. The patient was informed that it is important to avoid Zosyn and piperacillin in the future to prevent a repeated hemolytic event perhaps worse than this episode.

In summary, this is a case of DIIHA caused by Zosyn- and piperacillin-dependent antibodies. Initial serologic results were identical to those seen in cases of WAIHA. The negative eluate was critical in differentiating this case from WAIHA, emphasizing the importance of performing an eluate on initial workup of apparent cases of WAIHA. This also demonstrates the importance of a careful drug history in the face of significant RBC hemolysis and serologic evidence of WAIHA.

References


Table 4. Results of testing patient’s serum with and without the presence of drugs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serum</th>
<th>PBS</th>
<th>Zosyn</th>
<th>Piperacillin</th>
<th>Tazobactam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>37°C</td>
<td>IAT</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2/11†</td>
<td>4/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive control</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>3+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eluate</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>NT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RT = room temperature, NT = not tested
* agglutination strength (0 – 4+)
† titer/score

Table 4. Results of testing patient’s serum with and without the presence of drugs.
serologically presenting as warm autoimmune hemolytic anemia and detected best in the presence of drug. (abstract) Transfusion 2006; 46(Suppl):127A.

6. Leger RM, Arndt PA, Garratty G. Unlike penicillin, the immune complex “method is the preferable method for detecting piperacillin antibodies.” (abstract) Transfusion 2006; 46(Suppl):126A.

Susan T. Johnson, MSTM, MT(ASCP)SBB, Immunohematology Services, BloodCenter of Wisconsin, P.O. Box 2178, Milwaukee, WI 53201-2178.

Attention SBB and BB Students: You are eligible for a free 1-year subscription to Immunohematology. Ask your education supervisor to submit the name and complete address for each student and the inclusive dates of the training period to Immunohematology. P.O. Box 40325, Philadelphia, PA 19106.
The Consortium for Blood Group Genes (CBGG) is a worldwide organization whose goal is to have a vehicle to interact, establish guidelines, operate a proficiency program, and provide education for laboratories involved in DNA and RNA testing for the prediction of blood group, platelet, and neutrophil antigens. *Immunohematology* 2007;23:165–8.

**Key Words:** blood group genes; molecular testing, workshop report; Consortium for Blood Group Genes; proficiency

**Background**

The Consortium for Blood Group Genes (CBGG) was started by a group of people interested in DNA analyses for blood groups who recognized that there was a growing need to establish guidelines and proficiency testing. The originator and overall coordinator is Marion Reid, and there are three country coordinators: Lilian Castilho for Brazil, Gregory Denomme for Canada, and Connie Westhoff for the United States. All members are expected to interact and participate. The background and progress, including the CBGG logo, history, and mission, have been published.1–3 The CBGG is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to provide a means for members to interact, educate, and help each other. The purpose of this report is to summarize the 2007 meetings, which were held in two locations: North Carolina, USA, and São Paulo, Brazil. It was written by the coordinator and liaisons, with input from members (Table 1).

**Discussion Documents**

Two documents, one entitled the *CBGG Document* and the other the *CBGG Discussion Document*, containing items for discussion, were circulated to members before the meeting and addressed by the group at both meetings. The information given in the *CBGG Document* was accepted with minor changes. Suggestions from the group present at the meetings as well as from those who sent comments via e-mail were incorporated into the Document; this updated *CBGG Post Meeting Document 2007* was distributed to CBGG members and is available to nonmembers on request.

**Template disclaimers**

It was decided that the disclaimer to accompany reports of molecular analyses developed by the group in 2006 was suitable for use in reporting donor and patient test results. The disclaimer was modified to reflect what DNA-based assays are intended for as well as what they are not intended for. Reference to the “FDA” and “CLIA” can be changed to include “Health Canada,” “ANVISA” (Agencia Nacional de Vigilancia Sanitaria) Brazil, or other regulating bodies as required. Blood components should not be labeled with molecular test results as the sole means of determining the antigen status; the disclaimer statement must appear on the product tag if that information is used. A separate paper report with the disclaimer is adequate.

**Guidelines for molecular testing**

It was agreed that the CBGG should continue with the development of “Standards” that are free and accessible for general distribution. The CBGG “Standards” have been shared with the AABB Molecular Testing Standards Program Unit (SPU) and will be consistent with the Standards being developed by them. A draft version of the AABB Standards will be sent to all CBGG members for review and comment. The CBGG “Standards” will also be compared with the American Society of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (ASHI) Standards to be consistent with them. The CBGG will discuss, modify, and finalize their “Standards” by open discussion and present them in an International Standards Organization (ISO) format and generic in regards to regulatory agencies. The CBGG “Standards” will be renamed “Guidelines” to reflect the fact that the CBGG will not perform laboratory inspections.

* a full listing of the members of the CBGG can be found in Table 1 on page 166.
Table 1. Members of CBGG

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Table 1. Members of CBGG
Target alleles

A list of target single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) was prepared for the CBGG Post Meeting Document 2007. Blood groups requiring analysis of more than one SNP to minimize the chance of misinterpretation were noted and are required. Control DNA samples were recommended.

Reorganization of proficiency program

A simple exchange of samples among several laboratories performing DNA assays for the prediction of blood group antigens has been in effect and operated by Marion Reid and Kim Hue-Roye since the CBGG was formed in 2004. Samples are exchanged in the spring and fall. DNA (or whole blood) from one sample is sent for testing for a defined SNP. For RBC typing, before shipping the proficiency sample, the predicted antigen was confirmed by a method other than DNA testing (i.e., hemagglutination) with the caveat that the proficiency exercise would not involve rare alleles and should be straightforward. Along the same lines, the proficiency testing program for platelet and neutrophil antigens (which is in development) should also be straightforward and not involve rare alleles. But unlike RBC typing, confirmation of the antigen(s) would be based on the DNA results only. Methods such as monoclonal antibody immobilization of platelet antigens (MAIPA) or modified antigen capture ELISA (MACE) assays are not usually performed for typing confirmation. Results obtained by the testing laboratories are returned to the submitting laboratory, which then confirms (or not) the results and interpretation. A form has been developed for this purpose, a copy of which is contained in the CBGG Post Meeting Document 2007. It was decided, starting October 2007, that the “submitting laboratory” should rotate among members of the Proficiency Program. For logistic reasons, there will be two programs; one with an exchange among the South American members and the other among all other interested members. It was also agreed that one proficiency sample would be used for all types of technology: microarray, PCR-RFLP, multiplex, and so forth. If more than one laboratory is in disagreement with the submitting laboratory, there will be an investigation. If only one laboratory is different, that laboratory should perform its own internal investigation. The New York Blood Center remains the overall coordinator.

Reimbursement codes

A list of Current Procedural Terminology codes for reimbursement in U.S. facilities has been included in the CBGG Post Meeting Document.

Conclusion

The CBGG is a self-help, nonprofit organization designed for members to support and to learn from each other. Anyone interested in molecular testing for blood groups and willing to contribute intellectually is welcome to join. To become a member, contact Marion Reid (mreid@nybloodcenter.org), Lilian Castilho (castilho@unicamp.br), Greg Denomme (greg.denomme@bloodservices.ca), or Connie Westhoff (WesthoffC@usa.redcross.org).

Acknowledgment

We thank Robert Ratner for help in the preparation of this manuscript. The findings and conclusions in this article have not been formally disseminated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and should not be construed to represent any agency determination or policy.

References


Marion E. Reid, PhD, Laboratory of Immunochemistry and Laboratory of Immunohematology, New York Blood Center, 310 East 67th Street, New York, NY 10021; Connie Westhoff, PhD, Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory, American Red Cross Penn-Jersey Region, 700 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123; Gregory Denomme, PhD, Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, Canadian Blood Services, 67 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M5G 2M1, Canada; and Lilian Maria de Castilho, PhD, Laboratory of Immunohematology, Hemocentro, Universidade de Campinas, Campinas, São Paulo Brazil.
Letter From the Editors

Thank you to contributors to the 2007 issues

The journal depends on readers, authors, editorial board, peer reviewers, and our Penn-Jersey staff. We wish we could thank all of you personally, but doing so is not practical. Instead, we thank each of you as members of an honored group.

First and foremost, we thank the authors for their reviews, scientific articles, case reports, book reviews, and letters to the editors that come not only from the United States but from many countries of the world. This has given the journal an international flavor.

Our editorial board is a prestigious one and we depend on them, not only for peer reviews, but for guidance in policy and suggestions for improvements. Special thanks go to our medical editors, who review every article for medical content, and to our technical editors, who read every article for technical content. The current board is listed by name in the front of each issue of the journal.

Our peer reviewers did a wonderful job in 2007. In each December issue we list them by name with thanks to each.

James AuBuchon, MD
Marla Brumit, MD
Laura Cooling, MD
Brian Curtis, MT(ASCP)SBB
Geoff Daniels, PhD
Judy Grishaber, MD
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Kristina Williams, MT(ASCP)SBB
Mark Yazer, MD

We also want to thank the office staff at Penn-Jersey, Marge Manigly and Judy Abrams, for their help in preparing the journal for press. They manage the manuscript submissions, keep up with subscriptions, and many other behind-the-scenes tasks. We also thank Mary Tod, our copy editor, Lucy Oppenheim, our proofreader; and Paul Duquette, our electronic publisher.

Finally, thanks go to our readers, whose enthusiasm and interest in the journal make it all worthwhile.

Sandra Nance
Connie M. Westhoff
Editors-in-Chief

Cindy Flickinger
Managing Editor
Monoclonal antibodies available at no charge:
The New York Blood Center has developed a wide range of monoclonal antibodies (both murine and humanized) that are useful for donor screening and for typing RBCs with a positive DAT. These include anti-A1, -M, -s, -U, -D, -Rh17, -K, -k, -Kpâ, -Jsâ, -Fyâ, -Fy3, -Fy6, -Wrâ, -Xgâ, -CD99, -Doâ, -H, -Ge2, -Ge3, -CD55 (both SCR2/3 and SCR4), -Okâ, -I, and anti-CD59. Most of the antibodies are murine IgG and require the use of anti-mouse IgG for detection (Anti-K, -k, and -Kpâ). Some are directly agglutinating (Anti-A1, -M, -Wrâ, and -Rh17) and a few have been humanized into the IgM isoform (Anti-Jsâ). The antibodies are available at no charge to anyone who requests them. Please visit our Web site for a complete list of available monoclonal antibodies and the procedure for obtaining them.

For additional information, contact: Gregory Halverson, New York Blood Center, 310 East 67th Street, New York, NY 10021 / e-mail: ghalverson@nybloodcenter.org (phone 212-570-3026, FAX: 212-737-4935) or visit the Web site at http://www.nybloodcenter.org >research >immunochemistry >current list of monoclonal antibodies available.

Meetings!

February 23–24  2008 Specialist in Blood Banking (SBB) “Last Chance” Review
Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center in Houston, Texas, is offering a review for individuals preparing to take the ASCP Specialist in Blood Banking (SBB) or Blood Banking (BB) registry examinations. This program may also benefit physicians who are preparing for the Board examination in blood banking and individuals desiring a refresher in blood banking. For further information, contact Clare Wong at (713) 791-6201 or cwong@giveblood.org or the Web site http://www.giveblood.org/education/lastchance.htm.

April 11–13  American Red Cross Immunohematology Reference Laboratory (IRL) Conference 2008
The American Red Cross Immunohematology Reference Laboratory (IRL) Conference 2008 will be held April 11 through 13, 2008, at the Chaparral Suites Resort, in Scottsdale, Arizona. For more information, contact Cindy Flickinger at (215) 451-4909 or flickingerc@usa.redcross.org.

May 8–9  Heart of America Association of Blood Banks (HAABB)
The spring meeting of the Heart of America Association of Blood Banks (HAABB) will be held May 8 and 9, 2008, at the Embassy Suites on the Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri. For more information, refer to the Web site at http://www.haabb.org.


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or contact:

Dr Tricia Denning-Kendall,
University of Bristol, Geoffrey Tovey Suite,
TEL 0117 9912093, E-MAIL P.A.Denning-Kendall@bristol.ac.uk
Blood Group Antigens & Antibodies
A guide to clinical relevance & technical tips
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Marion E. Reid and Christine Lomas-Francis

The authors are using royalties generated from the sale of this pocketbook for educational purposes to mentor people in the joys of immunohematology as a career. They will accomplish this in the following ways:

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This compact “pocketbook” from the authors of the Blood Group Antigen FactsBook is a must for anyone who is involved in the laboratory or bedside care of patients with blood group alloantibodies.

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   c. Materials and Methods
   d. Results
   e. Discussion

5. Acknowledgments: Acknowledge those who have made substantial contributions to the study, including secretarial assistance; list any grants.

6. References
   a. In text, use superscript, Arabic numbers.
   b. Number references consecutively in the order they occur in the text.

7. Tables
   a. Head each with a brief title; capitalize the first letter of first word (e.g., Table 1. Results of ... ) use no punctuation at the end of the title.

8. Figures
   a. Figures can be submitted either by e-mail or as photographs (5” × 7” glossy).
   b. Place caption for a figure on a separate page (e.g., Fig. 1 Results of ...), ending with a period. If figure is submitted as a glossy, place first author’s name and figure number on back of each glossy submitted.

9. Author information
   a. List first name, middle initial, last name, highest degree, position held, institution and department, and complete address (including ZIP code) for all authors. List country when applicable.

III. EDUCATIONAL FORUM

A. All submitted manuscripts should be approximately 2000 to 2500 words with pertinent references. Submissions may include:
   1. An immunohematologic case that illustrates a sound investigative approach with clinical correlation, reflecting appropriate collaboration to sharpen problem solving skills
   2. Annotated conference proceedings

B. Preparation of manuscript

1. Title page
   a. Capitalize first word of title.
   b. Initials and last name of each author (no degrees; all CAPS)

2. Text
   a. Case should be written as progressive disclosure and may include the following headings, as appropriate
      i. Clinical Case Presentation: Clinical information and differential diagnosis
      ii. Immunohematologic Evaluation and Results: Serology and molecular testing
      iii. Interpretation: Include interpretation of laboratory results, correlating with clinical findings
      iv. Recommended Therapy: Include both transfusion and nontransfusion-based therapies
      v. Discussion: Brief review of literature with unique features of this case
      vi. Reference: Limited to those directly pertinent
      vii. Author information (see II.B.9.)
      viii. Tables (see II.B.7.)

IV. LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A. Preparation

1. Heading (To the Editor)
2. Title (first word capitalized)
3. Text (written in letter [paragraph] format)
4. Author(s) (type flush right; for first author: name, degree, institution, address [including city, state, ZIP code and country]; for other authors: name, degree, institution, city and state)

5. References (limited to ten)
6. Table or figure (limited to one)

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Subject Index

ABO blood group system
ABO expression on megakaryocytes 23(1):20
B(A) blood group—Chinese 23(2):69

Autoimmune hemolytic anemia (AIHA)
Characterization of autoantibody by use of gel technology 23(2):59
Correlation of immunoglobulins and complement with hemolysis 23(2):59
Drugs that suppress autoimmune hemolytic anemia (AIHA) 23(3):120
Use of antibody preparations 23(3):120
Use of corticosteroids 23(3):120
Use of immunosuppressive agents 23(3):120
Use of splenectomy 23(3):120

Biochemistry
ABO glycoconjugates on platelets 23(1):20
GPIIIa isolated as carrier protein for HPA-1α 23(1):2
Primers—PCR-SSP for B(A) genotyping 23(2):69
Relative expression of carbohydrate antigens in secretions and mucosal surfaces 23(3):100
Sequencing chromatograms 23(2):69

Blood components—manufacturing practices
Effect of FFP and FP24 processing conditions on FV and FVIII activity 23(4):150
FFP—functional content 23(4):150
FP24—functional content 23(4):150
Thawed Plasma—functional content 23(4):150

Blood group antibodies
ABO titers in platelet donors 23(1):20
ABO titers in donors—comparison of Japanese, Laotian, and Thai populations 23(1):38
Anti-AnWj—transfusion of AnWj+ RBCs 23(2):55
Anti-Jsb—transfusion of Js(b+) RBCs 23(2):75
Anti-EnaFR 23(4):146

Anti-P1—detected as ABO discrepancy 23(3):130
Complement-binding alloantibodies 23(3):93

Case reports
Anti-AnWj—transfusion of AnWj+ RBCs 23(2):55
Anti-hrB/HrB in pregnancies 23(4):143
Anti-hrB after anti-D production 23(4):158
Anti-Jsb—multiple transfusions of Js(b+) RBCs 23(2):75
Anti-P1—detected through ABO discrepancy 23(3):130
Delayed hemolytic transfusion reaction 23(3):93
MNS—antibody to high-prevalence MNS antigen in person with GPJL/Mk phenotype 23(4):146
Warm autoantibody or drug-dependent antibody 23(4):161

Cell therapy products
FDA regulation and guidance 23(2):63
ISBT bar-coded product labels and unique identifiers 23(2):63
Labeling systems 23(2):63
Minimally manipulated products 23(2):63
Product names 23(2):63

Complement
Complement-binding alloantibodies 23(3):93
Correlation of immunoglobulin and complement with hemolysis in autoimmune diseases 23(2):59

Direct antiglobulin test (DAT)
DAT—investigation of hemolytic transfusion reaction 23(3):93
DAT-positive autoimmune diseases—use of gel technology to characterize autoantibody 23(2):59
Positive DATs caused by nonimmunologic adsorption of protein 23(3):105
**Disease associations**

*Neisseria gonorrhoeae* infection—carbohydrate blood groups 23(3):100

Neonatal alloimmune thrombocytopenia (NATP)—anti-HPA-1a 23(1):2

Posttransfusion purpura (PTP)—association with anti-HPA-1a 23(1):2

**Donors**

ABO titers in platelet donors 23(1):20

ABO titers in donors—comparison of Japanese, Laotian, and Thai populations 23(1):38

**Education**


Use of mutations in GPIIIa gene to determine population migrations 23(1):2

**Genetics**

Genetic basis for HPA-1a/b polymorphism 23(1):2

Platelet ABO and genetic variation 23(1):20

Pedigree chart—B(A) 23(2):69

**Hemolytic transfusion reactions (HTR)**

Change in laboratory variables 23(3):93

Due to platelets—ABO minor incompatible or out-of-group 23(1):20

Due to platelets—approaches to minimize hazards 23(1):20

Due to platelets—identification of “dangerous” donors 23(1):20

Due to platelets—plasma reduction and use of platelet additive solutions 23(1):20

Due to platelets—limiting infusion of incompatible plasma 23(1):20

Due to platelets—use of A2 donors as universal platelet donors 23(1):20

Due to RBCs—clinical manifestations 23(3):93

Extravascular destruction of RBCs 23(3):93

Intravascular destruction of RBCs 23(3):93

Investigation approach 23(3):93

Transfusion-associated fatalities 23(3):93

**Immune hemolysis**

Clinical hemolysis—association with immunoglobulin and complement fractions in autoimmune disease 23(2):59

Clinical manifestations—HTR 23(3):93

Complement-mediated intravascular destruction of RBCs 23(3):93

Drugs that cause autoimmune hemolytic anemia (AIHA) 23(3):105

IgG antibody-mediated extravascular destruction of RBCs 23(3):93

Technical hints for investigating drug induced immune hemolytic anemia 23(3):105

**Methods**

2-ME—use in determining ABO titers 23(1):38

Complement-dependent lysis—use in HPA antibody detection 23(1):2

DNA-based ABO genotyping—PCR-SSP 23(2):69

DNA—sequencing-based typing 23(4):146

Gel technology—application in serologic characterization of autoantibody in DAT-positive autoimmune diseases 23(2):59

Immunoblotting—use of monoclonal anti-GPA+GPB 23(4):146

Monocyte monolayer assay (MMA)—anti-Js^b^ 23(2):75

Monocyte monolayer assay (MMA)—anti-AnWj 23(2):55

**Molecular**

P1^A1^ structure 23(1):2

**Platelets/white cells**

HPA-1a—immune response 23(1):2

HPA-1a/b system—hemostasis 23(1):2

HPA-1a and 1b—serologic characterization 23(1):2

HPA nomenclature 23(1):34

Platelet aging—22°C vs. 37°C 23(1):14

Platelet function—Effect of PAS on metabolism 23(1):14

**Reviews**

ABO and platelet transfusion therapy 23(1):20

Drugs that cause autoimmune hemolytic anemia (AIHA) 23(3):105
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page/Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drugs that suppress autoimmune hemolytic anemia (AIHA)</td>
<td>23(3):120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFP, FP24, and Thawed Plasma</td>
<td>23(4):150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemolytic transfusion reactions</td>
<td>23(3):93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPA-1a/b (P1\textsuperscript{A1/A2}, Z\textsuperscript{a/b})</td>
<td>23(1):2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labeling of cell therapy products</td>
<td>23(2):63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonatal alloimmune thrombocytopenia (NAIT)</td>
<td>23(1):9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platelet additive solutions (PAS)</td>
<td>23(1):14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfusion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFP—indications for transfusion</td>
<td>23(4):150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP24—indications for transfusion</td>
<td>23(4):150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platelet—ABO compatibility and platelet transfusion response</td>
<td>23(1):20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platelet—ABO incompatibility and HLA alloimmunization</td>
<td>23(1):20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platelet—use of PAS for preparation of platelets</td>
<td>23(1):14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifts in shipment of transfusable plasma</td>
<td>23(4):150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thawed Plasma—indications for transfusion</td>
<td>23(4):150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfusion-associated fatalities</td>
<td>23(3):93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transplantation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABO, platelets, and transplantation</td>
<td>23(1):20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Contributors to Volume 23

| A               | Ackley, RJ | 23(3):130 |
|                 | Arndt, PA  | 23(3):105 |
|                 | Aster, RH  | 23(1):2  |
| B               | Bailey, D  | 23(2):75 |
|                 | Bray, SJ   | 23(3):100 |
|                 | Byrne, KM  | 23(3):130 |
| C               | Castilho, L| 23(2):81 |
|                 |            | 23(4):165 |
|                 | Chaudhary, RK| 23(2):59 |
|                 | Chen, HP   | 23(2):69 |
|                 | Cooling, L | 23(1):20 |
| D               | Das, SS    | 23(2):59 |
|                 | Denomme, G | 23(2):81 |
|                 |            | 23(4):165 |
| E               | Eder, AF   | 23(4):150 |
|                 | Ewing, NP  | 23(2):75 |
| F               | Franklin, RA| 23(3):100 |
| G               | Garratty, G| 23(3):105 |
|                 | Gulliksson, H| 23(1):14 |
|                 | Guo, ZH   | 23(2):69 |
| H               | Haley, NR  | 23(2):63 |
|                 | Henry, SM  | 23(3):100 |
|                 | Hue-Roye, K| 23(4):146 |
| J               | Johnson, ST| 23(3):93 |
|                 |            | 23(4):161 |
| K               | Kaplan, C  | 23(1):9  |
|                 | Keashen-Snell, M | 23(1):34 |
|                 | King, KE   | 23(3):120 |
| L               | Lo, MK     | 23(3):100 |
|                 | Liu, DZ    | 23(2):69 |
|                 | Liu, X     | 23(2):69 |
|                 | Lomas-Francis, C | 23(4):146 |
|                 |            | 23(4):158 |
| M               | Maldonado, T| 23(4):146 |
|                 | Martin, Y  | 23(4):146 |
|                 | Mazda, T   | 23(1):38 |
|                 | McGrath, C | 23(4):158 |
|                 | Miller, JP  | 23(2):63 |
|                 | Miyamoto, J| 23(4):146 |
|                 | Moore, SB  | 23(2):55 |
| N               | Nathalang, O| 23(1):38 |
|                 | Needs, M   | 23(4):143 |
|                 | Newman, PJ | 23(1):2 |
| P               | Perry, HE  | 23(3):100 |
| R               | Ratliff, J  | 23(4):146 |
|                 | Richa, EM  | 23(2):55 |
|                 | Reid, ME   | 23(2):81 |
|                 |            | 23(4):146 |
|                 |            | 23(4):158 |
|                 |            | 23(4):165 |
| S               | Salvador, M| 23(2):75 |
|                 | Sausais, L | 23(4):146 |
|                 | Sebok, MA  | 23(4):150 |
|                 | Slater, D  | 23(4):146 |
|                 | Stowers, RE| 23(2):55 |
|                 | Stubbs, JR | 23(2):55 |
|                 | Svensson, LAC| 23(3):100 |

| T               | Tadokoro, K| 23(1):38 |
|                 | Thammavong, T| 23(1):38 |
|                 | Tillyer, L  | 23(4):143 |
| U               | Uhl, L      | 23(3):93 |
| V               | Velliquette, RW| 23(4):146 |
|                 | Veneman, S  | 23(4):146 |
| W               | Walker, PS  | 23(4):158 |
|                 | Wang, JL    | 23(2):69 |
|                 | Wang, S     | 23(2):75 |
|                 | Ward, J     | 23(4):146 |
|                 | Westphal, PE| 23(3):130 |
|                 | Westhoff, CM| 23(2):81 |
|                 |            | 25(4):165 |
|                 | Win, N      | 23(4):143 |
| X               | Xiang, D   | 23(2):69 |
| Y               | Yabe, R     | 23(1):38 |
|                 | Yomtovian, R| 23(4):158 |
|                 | Yuan, S     | 23(2):75 |
| Z               | Zhao, TM    | 23(2):69 |
|                 | Zhu, ZY     | 23(2):69 |
**What is a certified Specialist in Blood Banking (SBB)?**

- Someone with educational and work experience qualifications who successfully passes the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) board of registry (BOR) examination for the Specialist in Blood Banking.
- This person will have advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities in the field of transfusion medicine and blood banking.

**Individuals who have an SBB certification serve in many areas of transfusion medicine:**

- Serve as regulatory, technical, procedural, and research advisors
- Perform and direct administrative functions
- Develop, validate, implement, and perform laboratory procedures
- Analyze quality issues, preparing and implementing corrective actions to prevent and document issues
- Design and present educational programs
- Provide technical and scientific training in blood transfusion medicine
- Conduct research in transfusion medicine

**Who are SBBs?**

- Supervisors of Transfusion Services
- Managers of Blood Centers
- LIS Coordinators
- Educators
- Supervisors of Reference Laboratories
- Research Scientists
- Consumer Safety Officers
- Quality Assurance Officers
- Technical Representatives
- Reference Lab Specialist

**Why be an SBB?**

- Professional growth
- Job placement
- Job satisfaction
- Career advancement

**How does one become an SBB?**

- Attend a CAAHEP-accredited Specialist in Blood Bank Technology Program OR
- Sit for the examination based on criteria established by ASCP for education and experience

  **Fact #1:** In recent years, the average SBB exam pass rate is only 38%.
  **Fact #2:** In recent years, greater than 73% of people who graduate from CAAHEP-accredited programs pass the SBB exam.

**Conclusion:**

The BEST route for obtaining an SBB certification is to attend a CAAHEP-accredited Specialist in Blood Bank Technology Program.

**Contact the following programs for more information:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Phone Contact</th>
<th>Email Contact</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>On site or On line Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>On line</td>
</tr>
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<td>On line</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Information can be found by visiting the following websites: [www.ascp.org](http://www.ascp.org), [www.caahep.org](http://www.caahep.org) and [www.aabb.org](http://www.aabb.org)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DEGREE(S)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>DEPT./DIV.</th>
<th>STREET</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>COUNTRY (FOREIGN)</th>
<th>ZIP CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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