Siriraj and the Donors

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Since the establishment of the Blood Donation service at Siriraj Hospital by Prof. Emeritus Dasnayanee Chandanayingyong, it has been expressed and endorsed that the Siriraj Blood Bank has retained the success of its blood donation program. Such success has developed and the growth in donation activity still continues due to many reasons.

First, the donor center is a part of Siriraj Hospital which has the philosophy to serve all people for the benefit of mankind. Second, the staff of the Siriraj Blood Bank has proven by our culture to serve and honor our donors. We always treat our donors well, and at the same time, we also teach and train our staff to advocate our donors’ effort of good will to help the patients. Third: The Faculty of Medicine of Siriraj Hospital always gives strong support for the Siriraj Blood Bank mission and realizes how important the blood bank is to accomplish the hospital’s mission. Without a secure source of blood supply, doctors cannot operate or transplant with success. Fourth: The donors are the true givers in the Thai community. Thai people are generous and willing to help people who cannot help themselves. Although we have been successful in the past until now, we believe that our success will be continued by passing the Siriraj Blood Bank culture from generation to generation, especially to give our donors the best care, best communication and best quality.

Donor Center Policy
Our policies as a donor center are to supply adequate and safe blood for patients of Siriraj Hospital and to provide best care for our donors. In addition, our donor center also provides education for medical personnel to learn about safe blood donation. We will never compromise donors’ safety for any other reasons. Our task must be done to qualify with full traceability so we can analyse and improve our service. Our operating hours are scheduled for donor’s convenience so we are open 365 days all year round, from 8.30 am to 6.30 pm on official working days and 8.30 am to 4.30 pm for weekends and all holidays.

The standard that we set up for our donor center is based on the National Standard as a minimal requirement and added to for the possible measures that are practical to our situation. As we implemented ISO 15189 version 2007 in 2009 for our medical lab such as transfusion service and histocompatibility laboratory, we also implemented the same quality system for the whole department including the donor center. Therefore, all documents have been controlled, all system procedures have been written and revised, our staff have had training programs and a competency assessment system. All processes were validated and documented. Quality assessment was audited internally and externally by the hospital external auditors. We intend to apply for international accreditation in the near future.

Apheresis Unit
The services that we provide for our donors are always the best as we can. In a donor center situation, we cannot demand certain blood donation on each day and if we do not have enough blood we cannot buy either. For this reason, we welcome blood donation at anytime during operating hours. We also implement an apheresis unit to collect special and additional blood products for the patients. Using the apheresis collection system, we can select special blood component fractions and return unneeded components back to the donors. The process will take one to two hours and is able to produce a blood product that is adequate for a full therapeutic adult dose. We started the first apheresis service in Thailand and continue to be the leader in full apheresis service including platelet donation, plasma donation, stem cell donation and therapeutic means for

Fig 1. Apheresis unit
particular diseases such as Guillain Barre syndrome and Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Purpura. Our special unit was also created by Professor Emeritus Chandanayong and the growth was boosted by Dr. Viroje Chongkolwatana who was trained for Apheresis in Tennessee State, USA. The apheresis unit provides extraordinary service to our donors by Mr. Viruch Chanjerboon and his colleagues. The donors can come to donate platelet every morning from 7 am, and the donation will finish during 8-9 am, then the donors can go to work on that day. The technical expertise and availability of our apheresis service is our pride and this evidences the service culture of our blood bank staff.

Mobile Collection Unit

Our mobile collection unit has been set up since 1964. In the year 2009, the Siriraj Blood Bank collected blood from 260 mobile collection sites and got 20,414 units of blood from voluntary donors (42.05% of total collection). Our mobile unit has the special bus to carry our team which consists of doctor, nurse, technicians, phlebotomists, donor attendants and driver. We bring all needed supplies enough to set up 8-12 beds at a blood collection site and provide a practical environment to select and collect safe blood. We can collect 100-200 units of whole blood from each mobile unit. The places that we send our mobile unit to are schools, universities, factories, and government or private company offices including department stores. We also go to places in Bangkok and its vicinity including nearby provinces such as Ayuthaya, Supanburi, Chonburi, Kanchanaburi and Saraburi. After collection, whole blood from the mobile unit will be separated into blood components in our Blood Bank. Therefore, one unit of blood can benefit to more than one patient, the same as blood that we collect in the hospital.

Blood Donation at Siriraj Hospital

Our blood donation room is located on the 3rd floor of the 72nd anniversary building at Siriraj Hospital. In this room, we provide services every day to recruit and perform blood collection. With a compact space in the hospital, we provide care to varieties of donors. Voluntary donors are blood donors who donate blood voluntarily for anyone who needs it, this group comprises of 70-75% of total donations. Replacement donors are donors from family members or friends who voluntarily donate blood to replace blood for that particular patient’s use or going to use. Directed donation is blood donation from a specific donor and for a specific patient, who are usually family members of the patients. Autologous donation is blood donation from the patient himself / herself for elective use in a limited time. All of these donation types are customers of our routine service which serve according to the patients and doctors need.

Donor Care Service

Our care and good will to donors is expressed from what we have done. For normal donors, we send out the blood test results from every donation to them accompanied with the invitation and schedule for the next possible donation. For regular donors, we test for essential blood chemistry and CBC for them annually and if we find an abnormal screening lab result, we will contact them and inform about the special issues and give initial advice to go to see and get evaluation from the experts. For those who have donor reactions, our donor’s manager has a special team to follow every donor until we realize that they have no sequela from that donation. Furthermore, any donors who have health problems can ask our staff for consultation. The nurse will do the initial evaluation of the problems and the doctor in charge will help when necessary. If donors have positive infectious screening results, we send the notification letters to all of them. The purpose of doing so is to provide useful health information so they can
seek appropriate medical service and take care of themselves as well as prevent the disease transmission to others. In the case of positive HIV testing, we have a complete system to carefully notify and give counseling to the infected person and contact a referral physician for them. We also ask for the support from the Department of Microbiology to solve the test problems in atypical HIV infected cases. This HIV infection care needs a lot of effort and resource, but this program represents ourselves and the efficacy of our donor selection process. We have learnt about atypical cases both in clinical and laboratory aspects of HIV which proved to be a valuable resource for HIV research for doctors working in Transfusion Medicine.

For rare blood donors, we will contact them and perform further investigation. Then we inform them about the importance of the findings and offer our services whenever they will need blood transfusion. The offer also extends to their family members to test their blood for the same rare blood type. Also at the same time, we ask for permission to contact them again if we need the same blood type in the future.

The majority of donors who have a long term relationship with us have a good impression with our services. The number of positive comments for our donor service are much more than negative comments. We have been awarded the "Star Award Project" from the Faculty of Medicine of Siriraj Hospital since 2007 which means that we pass the criteria of donor care service evaluation.

Moreover, our staff together with our leader create the culture of being available whenever the hospital needs our service. Working after normal operating hours can be easily requested with appropriate reasons, and no one will deny to do so. We always prepare ourselves for extraordinary service such as accommodation service for several hundred donors even on holidays. Sometimes when donors develop reactions after blood donation, our staff will take care of them and even bring them back home when necessary, so we can make sure that they arrive home safely. This is our culture of taking care of the donors. One of our staff expressed his feeling about the Siriraj Blood Bank as follows: "All honour, pride and success in my life, I have gained from the Siriraj Blood Bank, therefore I will do anything for the Siriraj Blood Bank and the donors in return." Our people feel that we must do something good to serve donors every day because they are generous enough to mankind to give blood from their body to save the lives of others.

The Future

Our blood bank will continue to give the best service for our donors, especially create and strengthen relationships with every donor. We need to strengthen our quality system and seek for international accreditation. We will manage to recruit more donors and retain safe donors not only for the patients, but because they are valuable resources for social science, transfusion medicine and blood safety research. Creation of research from our donors' resource is possible for learning and improving our donor service and the Thailand Scientific community. Management by fact is our goal, and donors and staff participation are the essential tools. To achieve our goals, we need good teamwork, knowledge and know how in blood donation. The essential assets are gather the good information and interpret without bias, with active listening and participation.

Finally, our missions are to provide safe and adequate blood supply for the patients of Siriraj Hospital, to teach medical personnel about blood donation and transfusion and to do relevant research in transfusion medicine. In providing education for medical students, residents, fellows, doctors, medical technologists and technicians, we provide an opportunity for them to learn in a real environment which creates a valuable experience for them and also for visitors from inside and outside of the country. We are indebted for all donors because they make all of our tasks possible and without them, there would be no blood bank.