

QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN THE WHO AFRO - ANGLOPHONE REGION

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Background: The WHO strategy for blood safety (2000-2001) states that the safety, adequacy and accessibility of blood and blood products depends on the establishment of a well-organized, nationally-coordinated blood transfusion service (BTS) with quality management systems in all areas. WHO therefore initiated and implemented the 'Quality Management Program, (QMP) to build capacity in quality management in all aspects of blood transfusion through an integrated approach of quality management training (QMT).

Aim: To assess the improvement in quality management systems within the WHO Afro 'Anglophone region and to identify challenges facing the Blood Transfusion Services.

Method: Regional QMT workshops (2000) and follow up workshops (2002) were held in Zimbabwe. Participants from 20 countries attended. Those attending the workshop were responsible for the improvement of the quality system within their work area, in their respective countries.

Complementing the WHO QMP initiative, selected countries requested facilitation to implement a QMS. In these countries a different approach was adopted; a training program was developed based on gap analysis. Quality and departmental managers were trained and became part of the decision making process in the development of the Quality System policies and procedures specific for their BTS. Progress on the implementation was monitored. The level of improvement was derived from the 'Quality Status Questionnaire', and on site assessments.

Results:

Quality System Element	Improvement (%)
BTS Guidelines /Standards drafted	35
Organizational Management	35
Documentation	35
Management of change (Equipment)	7
Training	14
Evaluation & validation (Methods)	35
Maintenance & Calibration	23
Records (Traceability)	23
Internal quality audit	7
Safety, Health, Environment	23
Cold chain maintenance	23
QC Program for blood products	7

(The abovementioned data will be updated as additional assessments are performed).

Conclusion: Despite the many challenges facing countries in Africa, the Quality Management Systems of Blood Transfusion Services in this region have improved. The level of improvement varies and is dependant on the level of commitment of the BTS Director to the QMP program, and the level of support given by external facilitators.