

Special Article - Blood Donor Motivation Strategies

Adaptations of Effective Blood Donor Motivation Strategies

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Editorial

Voluntary blood donation is an essential source for the smooth functioning of a blood bank as blood from non-remunerated donors is the safest blood for transfusion services. Blood transfusion is an important component of modern medicine to treat the sick on time. To meet the entire blood needs of a country we ideally need to establish a transfusion service that sources blood entirely from voluntary blood donors. Successful donor service centres therefore should know how to attract and retain voluntary donors.

Every blood bank adopts tailor-made motivation techniques. These techniques are designed to reflect the basic cultural background of the locality and should communicate the importance and necessity of voluntary blood donation to the public. This communication will be more effective and convincing, when it uses local languages. A successful strategy / technique in one blood bank may not suit another locality because of cultural differences. Strategies that focus on retaining return donors and transforming first-time donors into repeaters will be beneficial [1]. Motivating people to donate is one of the most important aspects in recruiting voluntary blood donors. Since India has different cultural backgrounds and varying local priorities, people planning donor education and motivation campaigns should bear in mind that people do not donate blood until they are asked to, and believe that many untapped potential donors are already available; indeed, there are further myths and misconceptions about blood donation among public and mitigating measures should be taken to address these myths. Recruiting and retaining blood donors remain key challenges for blood agencies [2].

A good donor register is necessary to acquire donor details on time. Recruitment of new donors and retention of the old donors are essential to maintain a donor register. Some donors may not donate blood after their first donation and remain one-time donors for the rest of their life. Drop-out donors affect the donor register and the targeted volume of blood collection. Blood donors who have temporarily deferred donation and those who have retired or lapsed for some reasons, could be encouraged to return to the joy of blood donation. Maintaining an accurate donor register is helpful to find out inactive donors and who can be encouraged to play an active role in donor recruitment, even if they are not suitable to donate blood.

Lapsed donors often just need to be reminded that they have not donated for some time. They simply may have forgotten, or stayed away because of dissatisfaction and anger at the kind of service provided by donor agencies - even a long waiting time might have irritated them. They need reassurance that there are action plans to improve the services, and that care will therefore be taken to avoid future inconvenience. The follow-up of all lapsed donors is a significant aspect of donor retention. Retention and management of prior donors may be more significant to meeting blood needs than motivating new donors [3].

Mass media that includes local newspapers, magazines, publication agents, TV, radio and others should be encouraged to create awareness among the public. Mass media can help in creating awareness and in behaviour change, removing the fear of blood donation, the myths and mis-conceptions, and with agenda setting, and creating a favorable climate of knowledge and opinions suggesting action plan and conveying newer ideas and concepts. Camp organizers may use electronic media and other sources for motivating blood donors. SMS, emails, websites, electronic and social networks are fast and appropriate tools to convey information for motivating bulk donors among youth and literates. Sending bulk messages through email, SMS and popular social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, Google plus, Orkut and Tagged could help motivators to recruit more blood donors in a broader area. Religious festivals, marriage receptions, birthday celebrations of political leaders could also be used to recruit more potential blood donors [4].

The majority of the blood donation programmes have used strategies based on outbound telephone calls and personal appeals. SMS, E-mails, websites, and social media are faster and are highly appropriate tools to convey the information that will motivate blood donors on a mass scale. Texting through WhatsApp is an appropriate strategy to convey messages regarding voluntary blood donation. This could be used as an active strategy to recruit more blood donors by sending messages during acute shortage in the blood bank. Frequent texts, awareness videos and voice notes can be sent to them, also communicating the venues and times of outdoor camps' schedule. This can help to motivate and recruit more blood donors, and it may encourage them to donate in the blood bank or in blood donation drives. WhatsApp can be actively used by blood bank personnel in recruiting new blood donors and retaining their interest in successful future blood donation campaigns [5]. Thus a successful strategy should carefully adapt available techniques to its own locality and this will enable blood banks to meet their needs in time.

References

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