is a theoretical risk of interdonor incompatibility only if administration of an antigen-positive unit follows administration of an antibody-positive unit before the next sample is obtained.

Most important, the routine use of antibody-positive units should help reduce the number that are discarded rather than transfused. Given the prediction that our blood supply may fail to meet our needs in the coming years as demand continues to outpace donations, a strategy for using antibody-positive RBC units should be useful in maximizing use of this limited resource.

References

Martha R Combs, BS, MT(ASCP)SBB, Transfusion Service, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC; Donald H. Bennett, BS, MT(ASCP), Transfusion Service, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC; and Marilyn J. Telen, MD (corresponding author), Professor of Medicine, Duke University Medical Center, DUMC 2615, Durham, NC 27710.

BOOK REVIEW


It is hard to believe that, not so long ago, controversies regarding platelet transfusion therapy centered around issues such as the relative merits of platelet transfusions in patients undergoing splenectomy for idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura or the practice of empiric platelet therapy in trauma patients receiving massive red cell transfusions. The areas of discussion have changed such that we currently debate the very content of platelet products (e.g., platelet dosage and leukoreduction) but the issues are no less contentious. So this textbook on current issues in platelet transfusion therapy is a welcome addition to sources of information to guide clinical therapy and laboratory practice. The authors are an esteemed roster of experts in platelet transfusion who have done a very good job of providing the reader with an up-to-date bibliography in this rapidly evolving field.

Because the book focuses on "current issues," controversies on any given topic often require some depth of discussion along with summaries of the authors' opinions. This is done particularly well in the chapter criticizing the clinical trials to prevent alloimmunization to platelets. The published data are summarized in an approachable, helpful manner that show the reader how the thought processes have evolved along with the data. Through clear exposition and, in one chapter, useful case examples, the reader quickly progresses through the wide variety of issues that now confront anyone attempting to decide what type of platelet component to transfuse to which patient on what indication. In other areas, however, additional pages devoted to further exploration of topics might have provided not only a good introduction but a thorough review of key fields. For example, lack of discussion of the problem of hypotension associated with kinin activation by bedside leukoreduction filters in patients taking angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors is an important omission of an admittedly rare phenomenon. The text's brief discussion of platelet transfusion indications do not explore some areas of controversy thoroughly, such as platelet transfusion in cardiac surgery, nor provide the reader insight into how clinical practices have come to be so varied.
Also, at a time when increasing attention is being focused on bacterial contamination of platelets, it is surprising that "current issue in platelet transfusion therapy" is not included in the discussion. Nevertheless, the authors do a commendable job of broadly surveying a large number of issues—from component contents and storage to clinical and laboratory management of patients—that will allow anyone entering the field to quickly grasp the key points of safe, effective, and efficient platelet hemotherapy.

In a text such as this, authors and editors must distinguish objective review and pedagogic opinions. The presentations in the text certainly meet the criteria to be classified as the former, but insertion of some personal opinion in bringing issues to a conclusion might have provided additional benefit to readers. The relative merits of apheresis platelets compared to pooled platelet concentrates have been discussed in review articles in the past several years, as they were in the text, and the authors of the text might have used this forum to propose a mechanism through which a hospital might resolve this debate for itself. The text includes an excellent discussion of approaches to investigating the cause of a patient's refractoriness but without a definitive statement about the application of these alternatives, such as through a defined protocol. In these areas, the authors might have given the reader advice on how to deal with these dilemmas in their own institutions in order to allow the extensive knowledge embodied in the text to reach further toward practical application.

This text provides a broad and useful overview of platelet transfusion issues that will be of great assistance to a technologist attempting to understand the interface of the laboratory with patient care, the resident beginning an exploration of how best to guide platelet therapy, and others who are approaching this complex topic for an in-depth look. The book will be an excellent primer in this regard and open many doors through which an interested reader could explore further. With periodic updates and additions in future editions to keep pace with this rapidly moving field, this text could serve as a prototype for investigation of controversial and evolving areas of discussion in transfusion medicine.

Lawrence T. Goodnough, MD
Professor of Medicine and Pathology
Washington University School of Medicine
and
Director, Transfusion Services
Barnes-Jewish Hospital
St. Louis, MO 63110-1093

James P. Aubuchon, MD
Professor of Pathology and Medicine
Medical Director, Blood Bank and Transfusion Service
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center
Lebanon, NH 03756

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COMMUNICATIONS

Letters From the Editors

Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics Sponsorship

In this millennium year, it gives the editors of Immunohematology great pleasure to acknowledge the 10 years of support from Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics. The first issue that was supported by Ortho was Volume 6, Number 4, 1990 and they have supported an issue every year since that time. In addition, Ortho has sent copies of every issue to all of their Banker's Club members since 1990.

Not only are the editors and readers of Immunohematology grateful to Ortho management for their dedication to producing quality blood bank products, we are also truly grateful for their support of education and for their distribution of Immunohematology. We hope this partnership will continue.

Delores Mallory
Editor-in-Chief

Mary McGinniss
Managing Editor

Abstracts: a Beginning or an End

The American Association of Blood Banks publishes more than 400 scientific abstracts in the journal Transfusion as a supplemental issue to their annual meeting. It is apparent to us, the editors of Immunohematology, Volume 16, Number 3, 2000.