Modern Blood Banking and Transfusion Practices

Fifth Edition
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DENISE M. HARMENING, PhD, MT(ASCP), CLS(NCA)
Professor
Department of Medical and Research Technology
University of Maryland, School of Medicine
Baltimore, Maryland

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Blood groups were discovered over a hundred years ago, but most of them have been recognized only in the last 50 years. Although transfusion therapy was used soon after the ABO blood groups were discovered, it was not until after World War II that blood transfusion science really started to become an important branch of medical science in its own right. Thus, compared with many sub-disciplines of medicine, blood transfusion science is an infant, growing fast, changing continually, and presenting a great potential for research and future development. To be able to grow, transfusion science needs to be nurtured with a steady flow of new knowledge generated from research. This knowledge then has to be applied at the bench. To understand and best take advantage of the continual flow of new information being generated by blood transfusion scientists and to apply it to everyday work in the blood bank, technologists and pathologists need to have a good understanding of basic immunology, genetics, biochemistry (particularly membrane chemistry), and the physiology and function of blood cells. To apply new concepts, they need technical expertise and enough flexibility to reject old dogma when necessary and to accept new ideas when they are supported by sufficient scientific data. High standards are always expected and strived for by technologists who are working in blood banks or transfusion services. I strongly believe that technologists should understand the principles behind the tests they are performing, rather than perform tasks as a machine does. Because of this, I do not think that “cookbook” technical manuals have much value in teaching technologists; they do have a place as reference books in the laboratory. During the years (too many to put in print) that I have been involved in teaching medical technologists, it has been very difficult to select one book that covers all that technologists in training need to know about blood transfusion science without confusing them. Dr. Denise Harmening has produced that single volume. She has been involved in teaching medical technologists for most of her career; after seeing how she has arranged this book, I would guess that her teaching philosophies are close to my own. She has gathered a group of experienced scientists and teachers who, along with herself, cover all the important areas of blood transfusion science. The chapters on the basic principles of cell preservation, genetics, immunology, and molecular biology provide a firm base for the learner to understand the practical and technical importance of the other chapters. The chapters on the blood groups and transfusion practice provide enough information for medical technologists without overwhelming them with esoteric and clinical details. Although this book is designed primarily for medical technologists, I believe it is admirably suited to pathology residents, hematology fellows, and others who want to review any aspect of modern blood transfusion science.

George Garratty, PhD, FIMLS, FRC Path
Scientific Director, American Red Cross Blood Services
Clinical Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Los Angeles, California
This book is designed to provide the medical technologist, blood bank specialist, and resident with a concise and thorough guide to transfusion practices and immunohematology. This text, a perfect “crossmatch” of theory and practice, provides the reader with a working knowledge of modern routine blood banking. Forty contributors from across the country have shared their knowledge and expertise in 27 comprehensive chapters. Over 500 illustrations and tables facilitate the comprehension of difficult concepts not routinely illustrated in other texts. In addition, color plates provide a means for standardizing the reading of agglutination reactions and illustrating complex material. Several features of this textbook offer great appeal to students and educators. There are outlines and educational objectives at the beginning of each chapter; as well as each chapter ends with case histories and study guide questions. An extensive and convenient glossary is provided for easy access to definitions of blood bank terms. A blood group antibody characteristic chart is provided on the inside cover of the book to aid in retention of the vast amount of information and to serve as an easy access and guide to the characteristics of the blood group systems. Summary charts at the end of each chapter identify for students the most important information to know for clinical rotations. Original comprehensive step by step illustrations of ABO forward and reverse grouping, not found in any other book, help the student to quickly master this important testing, which represents the foundation of blood banking. The introduction to the historical aspects of blood transfusion and preservation is a prelude to the basic concepts of genetics, blood group immunology, molecular biology, and current overview of blood group systems. The next section of the book focuses on routine blood bank practices, including donor selection, component preparation, detection and identification of antibodies, compatibility testing, transfusion therapy, and apheresis. A chapter on transfusion safety and federal regulations clarifies the required quality assurance and inspection procedures. New to the fifth edition is Chapter 4, Concepts in Molecular Biology, which introduces the student to nucleic acid techniques and theory that govern molecular genetics in determining compatibility between donor and recipient, production of recombinant proteins such as growth factors utilized in certain apheresis procedures, and detection of transfusion-transmitted viruses in transfusion medicine. Certain clinical situations that are particularly relevant to blood banking are discussed in detail, including transfusion reactions, hemolytic disease of the newborn, autoimmune and drug-induced hemolytic anemia, transfusion-transmitted viruses, human leukocyte antigens, and paternity testing. Chapter 26, Informational Systems in the Blood Bank, helps prepare blood bankers for the responsibility of operating and maintaining a blood bank information system. Unique to this book is Chapter 27, Medicolegal and Ethical Aspects of Providing Blood Collection and Transfusion Services.

This book is a culmination of the tremendous efforts of a number of dedicated professionals who participated in this project by donating their time and expertise because they care about the blood bank profession. The book’s intention is to foster improved patient care by providing the reader with a basic understanding of the function of blood, the involvement of blood group antigens and antibodies, the principles of transfusion therapy, and the adverse effects of blood transfusion. It has been designed to generate an unquenchable thirst for knowledge in all medical technologists, blood bankers, and practitioners, whose education, knowledge, and skills provide the public with excellent health care.

Denise M. Harmening, PhD, MT(ASCP), CLS(NCA)
CONTRIBUTORS

Lucia M. Berte, MA, MT(ASCP)SBB, DLM, CQA(ASQ)/CQMgr
Quality Systems Consultant
Elmhurst, Illinois

Maria P. Bettinotti, PhD, dip. ABHI
Molecular Immunology Laboratory
Department of Transfusion Medicine
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland

Loni Calhoun, MT(ASCP)SBB
Senior Technical Specialist, Education and Immunohematology
Division of Transfusion Medicine
ULCA Medical Center
Los Angeles, California

Cara L. Calvo, MS, MT(ASCP)SH, CLS(NCA)
Director and Assistant Clinical Professor
West Central Ohio Clinical Laboratory Science Program
Ohio Northern University, Department of Biological Sciences
Ada, Ohio

Lorraine Caruccio, PhD, MT(ASCP)SBB
Laboratory of Molecular Immunology
Department of Transfusion Medicine
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland

Judy Ellen Ciaraldi, BS, MT(ASCP)SBB, CQA(ASQ)
Consumer Safety Officer
Division of Blood Applications
Office of Blood Research and Review
Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Rockville, Maryland

Lloyd O. Cook, MD, MBA
Medical Director, Blood Bank and Transfusion Medicine
Assistant Professor, Department of Pathology
Medical College of Georgia
Augusta, Georgia

Deborah Firestone, MA, MT(ASCP)SBB
Chair, Clinical Laboratory Science
Stony Brook Health Sciences Center
School of Health Technology and Management
Division of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Sciences
State University of New York at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, New York

Ralph E.B. Green, B. App. Sci., FAIMLS, MACE
Associate Professor
Faculty Director of Teaching Quality
Department of Medical Laboratory Science
RMIT University
Melbourne, Australia

Denise M. Harmening, PhD, MT(ASCP), CLS(NCA)
Professor, Department of Medical and Research Technology
University of Maryland, School of Medicine
Baltimore, Maryland

Chantal Ricaud Harrison, MD
Medical Director
Medical Center Blood Bank
Associate Professor
Department of Pathology
University of Texas—Health Center
San Antonio, Texas

Virginia C. Hughes, MS, MT(ASCP)SBB, CLS(NCA)
Instructor, Division of Clinical Laboratory Sciences
Auburn University Montgomery
Montgomery, Alabama

Patsy C. Jarreau, MHS, CLS(NCA), MT(ASCP)
Associate Professor
Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences
LSU Health Sciences Center
New Orleans, Louisiana

Melanie S. Kennedy, MD
Associate Professor, Department of Pathology
Ohio State University College of Medicine
Director of Transfusion Medicine
Ohio State University Medical Center
Columbus, Ohio
CONTRIBUTORS

Dave Krugh, MT(ASCP)SBB, CLS, CLCP(NCA)
Compliance Officer, Transfusion Service
The Ohio State University Medical Center
Instructor, Department of Pathology
College of Medicine and Public Health
Columbus, Ohio

Patricia Joyce Larison, MA, MT(ASCP)SBB
Blood Bank Supervisor
Associate Professor, Department of Medical Technology
Medical College of Georgia
Augusta, Georgia

Regina M. Leger, MSQA, MT(ASCP)SBB, CQMgr(ASQ)
Research Associate II
American Red Cross Blood Services
Southern California Region
Los Angeles, California

Gary Moroff, PhD
Director, Blood Development
American Red Cross
Jerome H. Holland Laboratory for the Biomedical Sciences
Rockville, Maryland

Mary P. Nix, MS, MT(ASCP)SBB
Clinical Laboratory Sciences
Weber State University
Ogden, Utah

Deirdre DeSantis Parsons, MS, MT(ASCP)SBB, CLS(NCA)
Department of Medical and Research Technology
University of Maryland, School of Medicine
Baltimore, Maryland

Donna L. Phelan, BA, CHS(ABHI), MT(HEW)
Technical Supervisor, HLA Laboratory
Barnes-Jewish Hospital
St. Louis, Missouri

Lee Ann Prihoda, MA Ed., MT(ASCP)SBB
Manager, Education and SBB School
Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center
Houston, Texas

Francis R. Rodwig, Jr, MD, MPH
Chairman, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Medical Director, Blood Bank
Ochsner Clinic Foundation
New Orleans, Louisiana

Kathleen Sazama, MD, JD, MS, MT(ASCP)
Vice President
Faculty Academic Affairs
UTMD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, Texas

Burin Sherrick, MT(ASCP)SBB
Blood Bank Supervisor and Adjunct Clinical Instructor
Lima Memorial Hospital
Lima, Ohio

Nancy B. Steffey, MT(ASCP)SBB
Assistant Director, Technical Services
Supervisor, Patient Services
American Red Cross Blood Services, Greater Alleghenies Region
Johnstown, Pennsylvania

Mitra Taghizadeh, MS, MT(ASCP)
Assistant Clinical Professor
Department of Medical and Research Technology
University of Maryland, School of Medicine
Baltimore, Maryland

Ann Tiehen, MT(ASCP)SBB
Educational Coordinator
Evanston Northwestern Healthcare
Evanston Hospital
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Evanston, Illinois

Kathleen S. Trudell, MT(ASCP)SBB
Clinical Coordinator of Immunohematology
University of Nebraska Medical Center
School of Allied Health Professions
Division of Medical Technology
Omaha, Nebraska

Melissa Volny, MT(ASCP)SBB
Technical Specialist, Blood Bank Teaching Coordinator
Evanston Northwestern Healthcare
Evanston Hospital
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Evanston, Illinois

Phyllis S. Walker, MS, MT(ASCP)SBB
Manager, Immunohematology Reference Laboratory
Blood Centers of the Pacific
San Francisco, California

Merilyn Wiler, MA Ed., MT(ASCP)SBB
Customer Regulatory Support Specialist
Gambro BCT
Lakewood, Colorado
Alan E. Williams, PhD
Director, Division of Blood Applications
Office of Blood Research and Review
Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Rockville, Maryland

Elizabeth F. Williams, MHS, CLS(NCA), MT(ASCP)SBB
Associate Professor
Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences
LSU Health Sciences Center
New Orleans, Louisiana

Scott C. Wise, MSA, MT(ASCP)SBB
Supervisor, Blood Bank Apheresis and Donor Room
Medical College of Georgia
Augusta, Georgia

Patricia A. Wright, BA, MT(ASCP)SBB
Production Manager
American Red Cross
National Testing Laboratories
Dedham, Massachusetts

Haifens M. Wu, MD
Assistant Professor, Department of Pathology
Ohio State University College of Medicine
Director Coagulation Laboratory
Ohio State University Medical Center
Columbus, Ohio

Michele B. Zitzmann, MHS, CLS(NCA), MT(ASCP)
Associate Professor
Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences
LSU Health Sciences Center
New Orleans, Louisiana

William B. Zundel, MS, MT(ASCP)SBB
Assistant Professor
Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences
Weber State University
Ogden, Utah
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