

**Mitos e preconceitos no processo de doação de sangue**

**Myths and prejudice in the blood donation process**

**Mitos y prejuicios en el proceso de donación de sangre**

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### **Resumo**

A conscientização e sensibilidade de jovens e adultos para a doação de sangue é muito importante para a preservação da vida humana. Este trabalho visa esclarecer como é simples a doação de sangue e desmitificar seus tabus, mitos e preconceitos através da literatura. Através de um refinamento na escolha dos artigos científicos, foram selecionados 22 artigos mais específicos para um aprofundamento no assunto, e também pesquisas em páginas eletrônicas de órgãos e entidades governamentais, manuais e relatórios de hematologia. O trabalho da consciência na doação voluntária deve ser trabalhado, rompendo os mitos e preconceitos da população, para que o ato de solidariedade prevaleça sobre o medo.

**Palavras-chave:** Doação de sangue; Banco de sangue; Doação de medo.

### **Abstract**

The awareness and sensitivity of young people and adults to blood donation is very important for the preservation of human life. This work aims to clarify how simple blood donation is and demystify its taboos, myths and prejudices through literature. Through a refinement in the choice of scientific articles, 22 more applicable articles were selected for a deeper understanding of the subject, as well as searches on electronic pages of organs and entities, manuals and hematology reports. The work of raising awareness in volunteering must be carried out, breaking the myths and prejudices of the population, so that the action of solidarity prevails over fear.

**Keywords:** Blood donation; Blood bank; Fear donation.

## **Resumen**

La conciencia y la sensibilidad de los jóvenes y adultos a la donación de sangre es muy importante para la preservación de la vida humana. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo aclarar cuán simple es la donación de sangre y desmitificar sus tabúes, mitos y prejuicios a través de la literatura. A través de un refinamiento en la elección de artículos científicos, se seleccionaron 22 artículos más aplicables para una comprensión más profunda del tema, así como búsquedas en páginas electrónicas de órganos y entidades, manuales e informes de hematología. El trabajo de sensibilización en el voluntariado debe llevarse a cabo, rompiendo los mitos y prejuicios de la población, para que la acción de solidaridad prevalezca sobre el miedo.

**Palabras clave:** Donación de sangre; Banco de sangre; Donación de miedo.

## **1. Introduction**

The blood donation process at blood centers does not reflect the expectations and needs of the service provided to blood banks, with the perspective of providing coverage of care in favor of users in health services, meeting the demand for blood transfusion (Ludwig and Rodrigues, 2005). There are many factors that influence decision making in relation to blood donation, for this reason the necessity of constant campaigns on the subject, with the intention of training and informing a larger number of individuals so that they become loyal donors (Fundação Pró-saúde, 2006).

When thinking about health, in which it reflects the various factors that influence and interrelate, like economic, social, political, educational and cultural, it is understood that only the educational process is capable of changing, transform or promote a society to evaluate or print new concepts, habits, contributing although their subjects also become co-responsible for the health process (Araújo et al, 2015).

In that connection, the change in this scene is necessary with a work that raises awareness and sensitizes young people and adults to the donation of blood as an act of citizenship, solidarity and preservation of human life. It should be noted that blood donation is a voluntary act of solidarity, which can be spontaneous or linked to a specific patient (Fundação Pró-saúde, 2006).

Based on the facts found, and the difficulties encountered in attracting donors, this work aims to clarify how simple blood donation is and to demystify its taboos, myths and

prejudices through the literature found and can be used as an essential tool for future campaigns.

## **2. Material and Methods**

A research is made to bring new knowledge or something new to society as stated by Pereira et al. (2018). The present article is structured by means of bibliographic review through survey in the databases of Scholar Google, Salud.org, Lilasc, Scielo, obtaining an initial sample of 87 articles related to blood donation. With a refinement, 22 more specific articles were selected. Seeking, in some cases, individualized deepening in the authors cited in the articles.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The Ministry of Health has found that convictions, fears and prejudices of the following kinds: “blood donation contributes to weight gain and physical weakness”, “once a donor, you must always donate”, “donating blood can thicken”, from other popular affirmations (Fundação Pró-saúde, 2006).

As predominant factors for non donation it is possible to quote fear (Ludwig and Rodrigues, 2005), have a health problem (Andaleeb and Basu, 1995), psychological and social (Nonis et al., 1996), medical disqualification and reactions to donation (Oswalt, 1977). Although the factors are cited in ancient literature, the same reasons that lead to non donation still prevailing.

It is important to note that some donors in their first donation may have factors reluctant to return such as loss of confidence in the hemotherapy service, if the experience is unpleasant, in negative situations or because they have seen or know something about some stock problem and even with access to information, there is a great unfamiliarity and some confusion about blood donation (Araújo et al, 2015).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) only 1.8% of the world population is a blood donor, while the ideal would be 3 to 5%, generating as a consequence, a decrease in blood supply to the population (Pereira et al., 2016). Campaigns most often succeed in giving visibility to the problem and disseminating information through the media, but their effect seems limited and temporary. There is evidence that the change in attitude is not permanent, that is, with the suspension of campaigns, the behavior tends to disappear

(Alves, 2005). The results for 2017 show that 3.4 million transfusions were collected, 64% of which were male and the rest (38%) female. Despite the high number, it is not enough to keep all the blood centers in the country supplied. Table 1 shows the amount of donations by state (site).

**Table 1:** Donations by Brazilian states.

<b>Region</b>	<b>UF</b>	<b>N° of pigtails</b>
<b>Midwest</b>	DF	53.748
	GO	122.034
	MS	57.348
	MT	67.395
<b>Northeast</b>	AL	43.991
	BA	197.788
	CE	112.472
	MA	79.015
	PB	884.563
	PE	186.798
	PI	56.619
	RN	52.798
	SE	24.968
<b>North</b>	AC	10.568
	AM	63.551
	AP	13.392
	PA	102.766

	RO	32.572
	TO	24.935
<b>Southeast</b>	ES	69.825
	MG	326.754
	RJ	155.170
	SP	830.140
	PR	238.485
<b>South</b>	RS	229.410
	SC	107.682
	<b>Brazil</b>	3.356.734

Source: Adapted from: <http://www.saude.gov.br/noticias/agencia-saude/45520-dezesseis-a-cada-mil-brasileiros-fazem-doacao-de-sangue#>

In view of that, there is a necessity to have projects that seek to raise the sensibility for the act of donating blood, emphasizing the demythification in relation to the false information about blood donation is necessary, making possible the conscience of the importance of helping others (Pereira et al., 2016).

The effectiveness of the *layout* in the donation process, considering the relevance of the physical factors of the interior architecture of a blood bank in the decision of the donors, the important taxes of voluntary blood donation through the identification of the personal characteristics of the donors, the aspects of the environment and the aspects of donor-institution interaction that can influence donation (Gonçalez et al., 2003).

To promote donation and obtain low risk donors, there would be a need to conduct epidemiological studies of the communities to be worked on in blood collection activities. Campaigns needed to be developed with actions that stimulated health promotion, healthy lifestyles, sexual education. The direction would be to capture and build loyalty, resulting in a reduction in the number of bags discarded due to the presence of serological markers for diseases transmissible by blood (Bossolan et al., 2011).

One way is to disseminate information through science in a popular form, making it accessible to the population in a simple and uncomplicated way, helping to attract new donors (Almeida Junior et al., 2019).

The school environment is the ideal context for the development of health-promoting practices, since it influences the development of values and stimulates the exercise of citizenship (Junior et al., 2019). Health education programmes should use pedagogical, social and psychological strategies to increase their chances of success. These results lead the blood centers to diversify strategies to increase donor take-up, including by using programs in schools. (Fundação Pró-saúde, 2006). In the specific case of programs, which target the child population, it is necessary to understand how children acquire concepts related to the health/disease process (Bossolan et al., 2011).

In Brazil, the Ministry of Health, as well as the blood centers, have been looking to increase the number of donors, especially the loyal ones, through media campaigns and development of activities in community contexts (Fundação Pró-saúde, 2006). Blood donation is not part of the daily life of the majority of the Brazilian population and, therefore, the insertion of the idea/action of donating blood is a slow process, which requires educational strategies of capture - a process in which planning, execution and monitoring and evaluation are essential steps for its good development. Research has shown that educational strategies contribute to make blood donation part of habits and values of the Brazilian population (Bossolan et al., 2011).

The voluntary donor is brought to the act for various reasons from donation, altruism and even gratitude for having already been helped in this way. At first, he will donate guided or by a request, which may be from a friend or relative in need of blood, or by a source, which may be the indication of someone who has already donated in this place (Toller et al., 2016). The perception of this source, an individual outside his or her family environment, usually under pressure of time, probably tired and perhaps debilitated by donating to a family member in need, demonstrates the importance of converting this experience into something that increases value for the donor to the point where it becomes a good source of reference (Ludwig and Rodrigues, 2005).

The institution's marketing effort, however, is to transform the first voluntary donation into a continuous donation. That is, gradually increasing voluntary and spontaneous donations, with consequent loyalty of the donor (Ludwig and Rodrigues, 2005). Nonis et al. (1996), verified the possibility of a significant difference between donors and non donors in perceived risk. analyzed the influence of physical risk factors (AIDS etc.), psychological

(fear), social (moral responsibility) and time (lack of time) in the decision to donate blood. The concept of biosecurity is of paramount importance when donating blood leading to distrust of the donor (Junior et al., 2020).

Many advances have occurred in hemotherapy services in terms of donor recruitment, which, combined with new tools, strategies, campaigns, research and modernity technologies, have changed the donor profile, respecting the particularities of each region, considering the differences and perceptions of its various audiences. Difficult and successful phases were experienced, but the Brazilian scenario still points to the existence of many barriers regarding the effective, continuous participation of the population in the donation process (Araújo et al, 2015).

Consequently, the collection of successful blood donors results from actions, strategies, projects and educational programs that do not dispense, in addition to evaluation, diagnosis of the context in which they are inserted, planning and monitoring of actions, in accordance with the conditions and possibilities of the society involved. According to research developed by Ludwig and Rodrigues (2005), Educational strategies provide more effective results for blood donation and may have short, medium and long term effects.

Two main factors determine the individual's compormental intention: a personal factor (your *attitude*) and a social factor (your *subjective rule*). Each of these factors is also a function of two other determinants. A person's attitude is a function of what they believe will happen when they perform the conduct (your *behavioural beliefs*) and the assessments it makes of the consequences of implementing that same conduct (your *consequence evaluations*). The second component, subjective rule, is a function of what a person believes others think they should do (your *normative beliefs*) and the motivation to correspond to what others think she should do – your *reasons to agree* (Cunha and Dias, 2008).

Bossolan et al. (2011), conducted studies with schoolchildren of various age groups where it was found that most children had more difficulty in identifying the feelings of recipients than donors. In general, it was very difficult to analyze feelings and decisions from the other's point of view, especially on the part of six and eight-year-old children. It can be assumed that younger children still have difficulty in considering external reality and objects as different from themselves and from a point of view other than their own. It is the family's role to provide information, to associate values and positive feelings with the donation, despite the very low number of donor parents.

The mass media are considered powerful vehicles of opinion formation because of their power to transform and put into circulation symbolic and cultural content for society.



However, there are literature reports that warn that the knowledge acquired by the population by the campaigns is not enough to change living habits (Alves, 2005).

When referring to blood donation, it can be said that the donor's blood, which is part of his being, through the donation followed by the transfusion, will be together with that of the other. The organic solidarity is embedded in love for others, for the present, for the here and now. The importance of nature preservation is then presented. It is the "permanence" of the being, the continuity of life. It is an immanent transcendence, an aura, an encompassing value. It is an ethic that serves as a cement for the various groups that participate in this space-time. Through organic solidarity, the joy of being together is evident, reiterated by the idea of the "permanence" of life (Pereima et al., 2010).

What few understand is that the taboos and myths propagated by the population in an empirical way causes damage to the blood supply system, resulting in a shortage in blood banks and thus to patients who need these donations (Silva, 2017). One way to avoid this information and provide real data to the population is through social networks used, bringing reliability and leading patients to donate.

Another determining factor is the prohibition of blood donation by groups considered at risk as homosexuals because of the wound in history regarding the transmission of the HIV virus and the development of AIDS. Prohibition data as a relationship with multiple partners, regardless of condom use or not differs from a heterosexual relationship between other aspects found in Brazilian legislation, and can be considered an unconstitutional act (Cardinali, 2016). Errors in the clinical-laboratorial sector are common in the country today, considering that there is the presence of human labor working with the scholarships, justifying the error in transfusions, however the diagnostic system used by the current blood banks are highly efficient, being able to decrease and avoid errors in the release of a blood bag with some pathology (hepatitis, HIV, HTLV, chagas, and others) (Cardoso-Brito et al., 2020), considerably increasing the number of blood donations if released to this specific group (Cardinali, 2016).

It is believed that in order to increase blood donations at blood banks, education and information to current and potential donors is necessary, however, it is necessary to respect the decision of those who do not wish to donate blood, independently of their social, cultural and psychological reasons.

#### 4. Conclusion

To understand the act of donating, in this case, the blood, is work for an investigation that goes beyond the one exposed here, since all human action is permeated by subjective, contingent, contextual aspects and in relation to autonomy. In this sense, therefore, the research design presents limits, pointing out some of the many aspects related to blood donation.

The work of consciousness in voluntary donation has to be worked, breaking the myths and prejudices of the population, so that the act of solidarity prevails over the cultural fear based on common sense. It is necessary to plan and develop pedagogical activities that lead the population to reflect, to have knowledge, information that breaks the fears, doubts and insecurities, and strengthen the conscious desire to donate, to participate actively.

The contribution of this article was significantly to clarify paradigms such as taboos and fear regarding blood donation by the entire population and should be used as a guiding tool for future work.

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