

Increasing plasma donation frequency: Insights from current donors

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Background

Retained plasmapheresis donors are critical to blood collection agencies

In Australia donors are able to donate plasma by apheresis every 2 weeks

- 🔴 In 2017-2018 the average number of donations made was 4.1
- 🔴 Over 50% of donors made only 1, 2, or 3 donations
- 🔴 Moving this figure higher would result in Australia moving substantially closer to its targeted level of self-sufficiency



How can we maintain a panel of plasma donors that donates regularly?

What is known about donation frequency

Barriers, motivators, characteristics

What is not known

Why do experienced plasma donors donate at particular frequencies?

- 🔴 Active decision or default
- 🔴 Based upon knowledge of other donors
- 🔴 Beliefs about the need for plasma



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Study aims

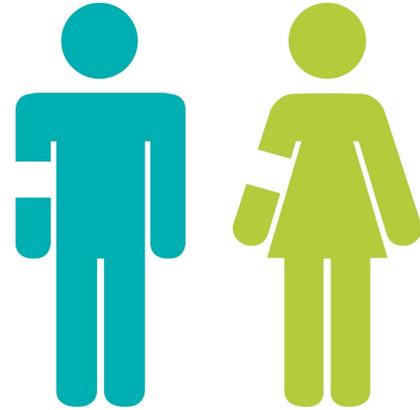
- 🔴 Identify how plasma donors arrived at their donation frequency
- 🔴 Garner their views on donating more or less frequently than they currently do
- 🔴 Explore the beliefs of donors about the current and future demand for plasma in Australia and on the plasma donation habits of others



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Participants

-  105 donors aged 20-69
-  41% women, 59% men
-  70% donated in metropolitan areas, 30% in regional areas
-  Donated plasma 1-2, 3-5 or 6-10 times per year over the past year.
-  Had been donating plasma for at least 1 year
-  All had donated whole blood



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Balancing donation with other commitments and interruptions

I try to...book for plasma approximately every month or so, just because I feel like that's a better gap for me in terms of my timeframe for my work

(30-39 year old man, 3-5 frequency)



Life just gets in the way, I probably would like to do it more, but you know when you're sick and then, or you travel, there's a lot of restrictions around that so I probably would do it more if I could

(30-39 year old woman, 1-2 frequency)



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Influence of health and wellbeing

I don't have the best immune system so I sometimes am sick so I have to cancel things or I am unable to donate because of that.

(30-39 year old woman, 3-5 frequency)

Well I experimented with 2 weekly cycle and I found the healing process on the needle entry point was incomplete for me, and I wasn't comfortable having another needle...medically it might've been healed but just didn't look good to me.

(60-69 year old man, 6-10 frequency)



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Establishing a sustainable donation practice

Yes I just feel like it's a good amount as I said I realise you can every 2 weeks but I'm not quite prepared to do that. I just think monthly is a good sort of commitment. (50-59 year old man, 6-10 frequency)

I was trying to do it fortnightly, trying to donate as much as often, but just due to things popping up, I was having to cancel appointments so I guess that's probably why it's worked out to that frequency. But I just yeah like to donate as often as possible. (20-29 year old woman, 6-10 frequency)



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Perspectives on donating more frequently

Donating once is good, but donating that frequently just adds to the pool of the resource...I mean one donation is brilliant, 10's amazing and more is you know, if I could do 26 it'd be great. (40-49 year old man, 3-5 frequency)

To me it would be being able to consistently donate and...do something good for somebody else but at the same time it's good for you too really. (60-69 year old woman, 1-2 frequency)

Barriers: time, scheduling, illness



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Perspectives on donating less frequently

I'd want to do more. Once you try it once and once you find out what's happening and how easy it is and that it doesn't hurt and there's a sense of satisfaction that you're helping people I think that would make me do it more than once a year (40-49 year old man, 1-2 frequency)

I'd probably forget, or it would be so spaced out that...I wouldn't do it, whereas when I'm kind of constantly either making appointments or rescheduling them it's more of a regular habit

(60-69 year old woman, 3-5 frequency)



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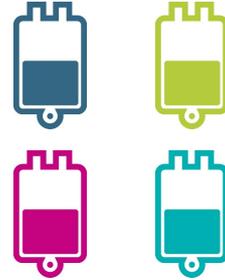
Knowledge ...How often do others donate?

I actually have no idea, no idea, I don't know anyone else that donates plasma, so I couldn't tell you.

(50-59 year old woman, 3-5 frequency)

Oh look I think people who have the time will actually more frequently around every fortnight – some of the places I go to the nurses and everything know people rather well so that's obviously in my mind that's because they frequent there a lot.

(40-49 year old man, 6-10 frequency)



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Knowledge ...Need and future demand for plasma

One of the nurses at the blood bank explained to me probably 6 months ago exactly what they do with it, and I was quite surprised actually, how much it's used and how much they need (50-59 year old man, 6-10 frequency)

We have an ageing population and therefore it's a further burden on health care, cancer treatments are only going to be on the increase, and so yeah I have no reason to think that we wouldn't need more (40-49 year old man, 3-5 frequency)



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Conclusions

- 🔴 Plasma donors actively consider how frequently they donate
- 🔴 Interruptions mean that yearly frequency doesn't always reflect donation habits
- 🔴 Information given to donors shapes their beliefs about donation
- 🔴 Established donors identify the benefits of more frequent donation and want to maintain a donation practice
- 🔴 Don't know much about other donors
- 🔴 Believe that their donations are needed and will continue to be

Our next steps:

Interventions
Publications



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