

The emotional impact of receiving a deferral: Donor and staff perceptions

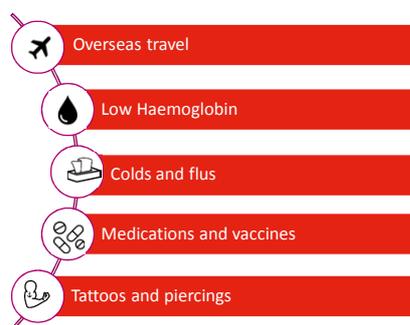
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Temporary deferrals

- Temporary deferrals are applied to protect the health and safety of blood donors and transfusion recipients.



In the US approximately 13% of donation attempts result in a deferral. (Custer et al., 2012; Zou et al., 2008).



Why do deferrals matter?

Temporary deferrals impact negatively on donor retention (Gemelli et al., 2017; Halperin et al., 1998)

- many donors **fail to return** when the deferral ends
- they take **longer to return**
- they donate **less frequently** in subsequent years
- Zou et al. (2008): 3.7m US donors were lost as a result of deferrals over a 6 year period.

The impact on donor return depends on:

- **Deferral type** (longer deferrals have more impact)
- **Donor characteristics** (more impact on female, younger, ethnic minority and first time donors)



WHY do deferrals impact on donor return?

- *Do donors not understand that the deferral is temporary?*
- *Are donors relieved to be 'off the hook'?*
- *Do donors want to avoid the risk of being deferred again?*
- *Has a donation habit been disrupted?*

Permanent deferral results in donors feeling angry, anxious, rejected, confused, and frustrated, over a long period (Kleinman et al., 2004; Whittaker et al., 2008).

- *Do temporarily deferred donors experience similar emotions?*



Study 1: Staff interviews

- **Donors deferred in-centre** were thought to react more negatively than those deferred in telephone screening prior to the donation.
- The time and effort involved in attending to donate were believed to exacerbate the impact.

The hard thing is when they wait 10, 15, 20 minutes and then they come through and you say, 'I'm really sorry but you can't donate today for [this reason]'. That's when they tend to get annoyed
(donor centre staff member)



Study 2: Donor survey

Donors deferred the day prior were asked to complete a questionnaire

(n = 397, RR = 24.6%).

- Aged 31-60 years (m = 46.4)
- 65% female
- 0-109 prior donations (m = 14 donations)
- Deferral duration 5-1884 days (m = 163)
- **83% deferred during pre-donation screening calls vs 17% in a donor centre**



Study 2: Donor survey

Knowledge: Are you currently eligible to donate?

- 63% no
- 14% yes
- 9% unsure
- (14% did not respond)
- Many donors did not know when they could return.



Study 2: Donor survey

Emotional reactions:

- **Discrete Emotions Questionnaire** (Harmon-Jones et al., 2016)
 - Modified based on staff interviews
 - 31 emotions experienced at the time of the deferral, rated 1-7
- Exploratory Factor Analysis: 6 factors, good fit,
 - **Anger** (anger, mad, rage, pissed off, unfair, dread, undervalued, rejected)
 - **Anxiety** (panic, nervous, scared, worry, fear, anxiety)
 - **Calmness** (easy-going, chilled out, calm)
 - **Sadness** (disappointed, guilty, sad)
 - **Happiness** (relieved, enjoyment, satisfaction, happy)
 - **Disgust** (empty, sickened, revulsion).
- **Mean scores were low**
- (calmness 4.0, sadness 2.4, happiness 1.9, anger 1.3)



Study 2: Donor survey

Hierarchical multiple regression

Do emotional reactions predict donors' **intention to return** to donate once the deferral ends? Other predictors?

- **6 emotion factors**
- **Donor characteristics:** Sex, number of prior donations
- **Deferral characteristics:** in-centre vs pre-donation deferral, satisfaction with information provided on the deferral, knowledge regarding deferral

Predictor	R	R ²	Standardised β
	0.373	0.139	
Prior donations			0.155*
In-centre deferral			-0.184*
Anger			-0.180*
Calm			0.129*

$p < .05$



Study 2: Limitations

- **Self-selected** donor sample.
- Regression model only accounted for 14% of variance in intention to donate.
- Assessed predictors of **intention to donate**. Still need to examine predictors of actual **donation behaviour** (planned for early 2019).



Discussion

- The strongest predictor of low intention to return was being **deferred in a donor centre**.
- **Supports to use of eligibility screening** prior to the donation.
 - Currently we conduct telephone screening
 - However, with donors increasing booking appointments online, we are exploring the possibility of a self-screen for donors to complete just prior to the donation.



Discussion

- Staff had observed donors reacting to being deferred with strong emotions; However, most donors did not report strong emotional reactions in our survey.
 - Retrospective accounts (recalling emotions several days later – are stronger reactions short lived?)
 - Are donors reluctant to report negative emotions?
- However, **emotional reactions reported by donors played a significant role in their intentions to return** after the deferral.
- Emotional reactions were more important than level of knowledge or satisfaction with materials provided.



Recommendations: Improve the in-centre deferral experience

- **Improve the deferral conversation to reduce negative responses among donors.**
 - Additional training, resources and support for staff is required.
- **Provide evidence-based donor education materials**
 - Normalise the deferral experience.
 - Address donors' poor knowledge of their eligibility.
 - Ensure donors are clear about their return date.
- **Oct 2018: Evaluating a new brochure/email/website and staff training package for donor centre staff.**



Thank you

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