

**DONOR'S PERSPECTIVES ON  
BLOOD DONATION AND CHALLENGES OF  
NATIONAL BLOOD CENTRE, YANGON  
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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## ABSTRACT

Blood donation is a pillar of modern medicine and saves millions of lives every year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the virus itself did not cause direct effect, but the unexpected effects of it on blood donation may contribute to adversely affect the blood bank services. This cross-sectional descriptive study using mixed methods was conducted to assess donor's perspectives on blood donation among 240 blood donors and to explore challenges faced by the National Blood Centre, Yangon during current pandemic by interviewing the three key informants. Among the blood donors, most of them (72.5%) had favorable knowledge, and majority (92.5%) had favorable attitude. Donating to help others was the commonest motivator for blood donation and restricted movement due to lockdown as well as stay at home program, and fear of COVID-19 infection were the prominent barriers to donation during COVID-19 pandemic. Of the donors, repeated donors were 90% and voluntary donors being 93.8%, while nearly a third (31.3%) of total blood donors donated blood regularly. The donor who had higher education level and higher income level had more favorable knowledge ( $p$ -value: 0.009 and 0.033 respectively). Being male, and who were older age had and who had favorable knowledge level donated blood regularly in this study ( $p$ -value: <0.001, 0.037, and 0.007 respectively) The donors who had willingness to donate in the future had more regular practice ( $p$ -value: <0.001). The more knowledge and positive attitude levels the donors had, the more times they donated blood ( $p$ -value: 0.027 and 0.008 respectively). The challenges encountered at the National Blood Centre, Yangon during current pandemic were reduced blood supply due to a significant decrease in blood donors, difficulty in availability of COVID-19 convalescent plasma, misunderstandings and coordination problems due to cancelling of mass donation campaigns, as well as changing donor eligibility criteria, cessation of urgent cross-matching room services due to limited human resources, weakness in following health protocols for COVID-19 infection among donors and staff, delayed arrival of consumable and logistics supply, and difficulty in timing for scheduling between staff duty and servicing for machines. Raising the community awareness, carrying out educational campaigns, making the blood bank into safe and clean zone, and proper plans as well as policies to mobilize the regular and repeated donors should be done to promote blood donation.