

## Foreword

Blood safety has been accorded a high priority by WHO and is an issue of concern to many developed and developing Member Countries. Recognizing the importance of blood safety, the theme of World Health Day 2000 was devoted to this subject with a thought-provoking slogan, “Safe blood starts with me: blood saves life”.

The availability and safety of blood depends on multiple steps in the transfusion chain. This starts with a healthy and motivated population, retention of voluntary non-remunerated donors, processing and testing of all donated blood, availability of blood and blood products, rational use of blood and its components and post-transfusion monitoring of the patient. At every step, any lowering of quality would reflect adversely on the final product. To ensure quality in blood transfusion services, WHO initiated a quality management project in 2001. One of the important areas identified under this project is capacity building in the quality management of blood transfusion services in which emphasis is laid on ensuring consistency in performing various activities so that the safety and quality of blood is guaranteed.

The performance of any procedure will yield desired quality results only if standard operating procedures (SOPs) are followed. Realizing that most blood banks in the countries of the South-East Asia Region may not have the capacity to write their own SOPs, WHO has developed model SOPs for various procedures that are commonly performed in blood transfusion services. Individual blood banks need to adapt these and develop their own blood bank-specific SOPs based on the infrastructure available, test procedures to be followed and availability of reagents.

I am sure the blood banks will find this model SOPs useful to help them in achieving their objective of continuously providing adequate, safe and quality blood.

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