

teams from primary care to highly complex institutions, self-care?<sup>(5)</sup> It is clear that education is fundamental; the structuring of a very specific program has been defended in Jamaica and the USA, with some centers dedicated to the care of pain and of acute and chronic symptoms,<sup>(6,7)</sup> and to some extent also in Brazil with the care provided by blood centers, some even with an infrastructure to hospitalize patients.

Finally, the study concludes that the epidemiological profile shows a predominance of children and young adults, female and the SS genotype. The hospital admission rates in University Hospital de Clínicas of the Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro and consultation rates in the Regional Blood Center of Uberaba and the low mean age at death confirm the high morbidity and mortality in sickle cell disease. However, the large number of children without complications or admissions reflects the effectiveness of the preventive measures offered by early diagnosis established over the last 10 years.<sup>(3)</sup>

It would be interesting for other services that attend people with sickle cell disease to follow up this study so that a national registry could be established and coordinated by the Ministry of Health in order to have a national profile with a multicenter model.<sup>(8)</sup> Also the impact of recently established public policies such as neonatal screening should be assessed in the adult population of the future and all the publications on the disease be developed and distributed by the Ministry of Health.

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## What are the characteristics of repeat blood donors?

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The concern to better characterize, guide and evaluate blood donation candidates is universal. In recent years there has been a strong tendency to distribute explanatory material to prospective donors, explaining what donation is, the implications for patients during transfusion and why it is necessary that donors are in optimal health conditions to donate their blood.<sup>(1-3)</sup> Despite the ceaseless efforts of groups who work with blood collection in Brazil, we still have not attained the minimum rate of collection per capita, that is, 3% of the population. This would provide an adequate supply of blood products in hematology services. A great supply shortage, particularly of packed red blood cells at critical times would not occur. Blood banks have a constant concern to find the ideal profile of the donor with the potential of repeat donations, in order to target campaigns towards this group. The importance of these donors should be stressed, as the rejection rate due to positive serology or high-risk behavior is low.

The study presented in this issue<sup>(4)</sup> is of paramount importance to characterize first-time blood donors who return and continue as repeat donors in the region of Recife, Brazil. The Blood Center of Pernambuco, Hemope, where the research was conducted, has an important role both in its region, and nationally, due to its concern about quality, which defines how its professionals work.

The results of this work characterize the profile of repeat donors, which will help in marketing campaigns directed at this segment of the population, with the goal of significantly increasing the quality of donations in their service. The results show that 77.1% of donors were male, predominantly between 18-24 years. Donations were spontaneous as well as requested by friends or relatives. A significant proportion had a history of blood donors in the family. The importance of family and friends to encourage individuals to donate has been described in the literature. This study showed that older participants

returned more frequently and donated more times. This fact is relevant since the Brazilian population is aging.

The increase in numbers of female donors may be related to the higher number of 18- to 24-year-old donors who donate as their mothers are blood donors. However, there is need for a more detailed medical history of this group of donors in respect to the number of pregnancies, type of delivery and the occurrence of complications during labor. These data are important to prevent transfusion reactions related to pulmonary injury triggered due to an increased presence of antibodies against the HLA system, which occurs in multiparous women. The characterization of the donor will provide a better end for blood bags at transfusion. This work is, therefore, relevant and is of great importance at both regional and national levels.

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