



Pakistan Society of Haematology (PSH)

▪ **President:**

Dr Parvez Ahmed

▪ **President Elect:**

Dr Salman Naseem Adil

▪ **Secretary/Treasurer:**

Dr Mehreen Ali Khan

▪ **Members Executive Counsel**

Armed Forces:

Dr Qamar Un Nisa Chaudhry

Dr Asad Mahmood Abbasi

Dr Muhammad Sajid Yazdani

Islamabad:

Dr Nadeem Ikram

Punjab:

Dr Saima Farhan

Dr Muniza Junaid

Dr Muhammad Irfan Khan

Sindh:

Dr Muhammad Irfan

Dr Ikram Din Ujjan

Dr Muhammad Nadeem

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa:

Dr Shahtaj Masood

Baluchistan:

Dr Hayat Ullah

Azad Kashmir:

Dr Zahida Qasim

Policy Statement by Pakistan Society of Haematology on Use of Convalescent Plasma in COVID-19

Coronavirus disease 2019 has affected more than 7.5 million people worldwide and more than 140,000 people in Pakistan. As per 13th June 2020, Govt of Pakistan (GoP) statistics more than 95% patient recovered from coronavirus and death rate was around 2%. Efforts are utilized to reduce this death rate to minimum possible. There is currently no approved treatment for COVID-19 and different investigational drugs are being used.

Convalescent plasma is one of the investigational treatments approved by GoP. Worldwide as well as in Pakistan. In Pakistan, specified centres have been granted permission to run clinical trial for use of convalescent plasma for COVID patients. This is important because currently there is no scientific proof for benefit of convalescent plasma in COVID-19 patients, conversely it can be harmful for the recipient. Cochrane review is considered highest level of scientific evidence and recent Cochrane review failed to document any benefit/enough evidence for use of convalescent plasma (ref: Convalescent plasma or hyperimmune immunoglobulin for people with COVID-19: a rapid review. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 2020). Similarly, there is no randomized controlled trial to support use of convalescent plasma for patients with critical disease and those on ventilatory support. Moreover, use of Convalescent Plasma can sometimes lead to life threatening transfusion reactions and transmission of infections. It is therefore important to use convalescent plasma as part of clinical trial only at designated centres as per advice of treating physician. Unregulated use without optimal donor screening and patient selection can be potentially harmful for the patients.

Contrary to the scientific evidence, massive advertisement and unnecessary media hype has made general public as well as some health care professionals to believe that convalescent plasma is the standard treatment option for covid-19 which has led to unregulated and large-scale misuse of plasma, including its illegal sale in the market.

We the Pakistan Society of Haematology requests the health department and regulatory bodies to take steps to stop this illegal and potentially harmful plasma trade and regulate in judicial use. We also want to apprise the health care professionals and general public about potential harm of the unnecessary use of convalescent plasma.

With kind regards,

Dr. Parvez Ahmed

Professor of Clinical Haematology

Director Bone Marrow Transplant

Quaid-e-Azam International Hospital, Islamabad - Pakistan

President: Pakistan Society of Haematology (PSH)

Dated: 14-06-2020

Corresponding Address

Dr Mehreen Ali Khan, Secretary PSH

PSH Secretariat, AFBMTC/NIBMT, CMH Medical Complex, Rawalpindi (46000) Pakistan