Reviewer's report

Title: Blood donors motivation and attitude to non-remunerated blood donorship in Lithuania

Version: Date: 10 March 2006

Reviewer: Theresa W. W Gillespie

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General
This article seeks to assess the attitudes of blood donors toward the system of paying for blood donation that has been in place in Lithuania since its time as a member of the Soviet Union. As part of its new membership in the European Union, Lithuania has pursued transition to a non-remuneration system. This survey of 400 blood donors was conducted at various blood collection sites at the conclusion of the donors' visit, apparently focused on sample of donors derived from one company. Of the 334 evaluable responses, only 34 subjects identified themselves as non-paid donors. The survey was designed to examine donor socio-demographic characteristics, donor participation in donation activities, attitudes of donors toward remuneration, and donor views toward continued donation if remuneration was terminated. The study is mainly descriptive as a report of the survey results. The authors give a helpful history of blood donation in Lithuania, the types of remuneration that have been given routinely in the past, and the reasons why remuneration was the norm during the Soviet period, and why the efforts to transition to a non-paid system have been initiated so intently. The study is weakened overall by its extremely small sample of non-paid donors (only 10% of the total respondents), to which the rest of the sample of paid donors are compared throughout the analysis.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1) The selection of the sample from one company, and the characteristics of this company (described as co-founded by the Lithuanian government and a US corporation) deserve greater attention. What impact on results might this selection have? Are the donors from this one company representative of the rest of the donor population in Lithuania?
2) The effect of such a small non-paid donor population as the basis for comparison for the entire study should be expanded in the discussion. Presumably, many of the data from only 34 non-paid donors may have resulted in very small cells in the Chi Square analyses cited. Justification for the analytic techniques used, or why other possible techniques that may be better suited for such potentially small numbers should be included.
3) The authors present an excellent example of another country, Germany, which faced a similar challenge in its own donor system, and which conducted a similar survey with similar results in 1995. However, no report of how or if Germany made the successful transition to a non-paid donor system in the following decade is included, and would be key as a possible model for Lithuania. Presumably, Germany, as another member of the EU, would also have needed to implement a non-paid donor system as well and its processes and policies may be important as a guide for Lithuania and other countries with similar challenges. Thus, including this followup information in the paper is considered essential.
4) The authors' wording is awkward and confusing in multiple places throughout the manuscript, requiring major attention beyond simple editing. The "Results" and "Conclusions" sections of the paper, in particular, would need extensive re-wording to ensure the correct interpretation of data by the reader, as the current language lacks clarity mainly due to language issues.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the
Many sentences commence with numbers (e.g. "88.2\%...") and need to be corrected in this regard.

2) Punctuation, including a number of places with missing punctuation (e.g. no period at end of sentences), needs attention throughout the article.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1) A brief description of exactly how blood collection takes place in Lithuania would be helpful, e.g. reference is made to donors giving blood at "doctors' offices", which may differ significantly from the process in other countries, including the U.S.

**What next?**: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest**: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English**: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review**: No

**Declaration of competing interests**: 
I declare that I have no competing interests.