

Qualitative study: Knowledge, Attitudes and Trends of the Palestinian Community about Blood Donation

Upon the request of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics conducted on May 2003 a qualitative study in the West Bank on knowledge, attitudes and trends of the Palestinian community about blood donation. The target population was men and women aged 15 years and above, regardless of their marital status.

The study provided information about knowledge and attitudes of the Palestinians about blood donation, transfusion, and the need of Blood Bank Service. It determined the limitations of blood donation among community.

Study objectives:

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the range of knowledge about blood donation among the Palestinians.
2. To determine the needs of the Palestinian community concerning the national blood donation services.
3. To determine the limitations and factors that affect blood donation among Palestinians.

Study instrument:

The study is qualitative one, two methods were used for data collection; a household questionnaire was designed in a way to allow collecting qualitative information through raising open-ended questions. While for the focus groups a draft agenda was designed with subjects oriented to let the targeted groups to discuss the attitudes and practices of the people towards blood donation, and then minutes from these meetings were recorded, and a moderator put down carefully each statement mentioned by any individual to reflect all the views and suggestions raised through the discussion.

The household questionnaire consists of four main parts:

Part one: aimed to collect information on people's knowledge about blood donation, blood transfusion, persons who can donate blood, and knowledge of tests performed on donated blood unit.

Part two: aimed to collect information about people's attitude towards blood donation and transfusion.

Part three: aimed to collect information about blood donors, reasons beyond not donating blood, fears of blood donation, and difficulties faced persons who need blood.

Part four: aimed to collect information about people's conceptions towards blood donation, needs of blood donation services and the expectations of such services.

The sample:

The targeted population in this study was all individuals aged 15 years and above regardless of their marital status. A sample of 540 households was drawn from 45 localities selected from 6 governorates in the West Bank (Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and Al-Bireh, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron). In each locality 12 households were selected randomly. Kish

technique was used to select the eligible individuals for interview from the household, either male or female.

As for the focus groups, three focus groups were organized, one in the north, the second in central and the third in south of the West Bank. The selection criteria of invitees to the meeting took into consideration several criterion, like age, social background, sex, key informants, member of local councils, and the public.

Main findings:

- * Most of interviewees (93%) indicated that they heard about blood donation, of them 93% are males and 92% are females. Concerning sources from where the interviewees heard about blood donation, the results shows that they heard about blood donation from relatives, friends and mass media.
- * Low percentage (30%) of the interviewees indicated knowledge of blood donation, could state the right concept of blood donation. Many false definitions were reported; “Exchange the whole blood for a person”, “Exchange the blood and transfer it to other person”, “Changing blood from bad to better”, “Transfer blood from place to another or from hospital to another”.
- * 43% of the interviewees knows that blood could be transferred to injured people due to accidents, 74% knows that it could be transferred to sick people, 18% to women during delivery, 27% during surgeries, and 22% indicated that blood could be transferred to other cases such as: anemic people and those suffering thalassemia.
- * 55% of the interviewees said that AIDS could be transmitted through blood. 9%, 8%, 5% said that Gonorrhea, HBV and HCV could be transmitted through blood respectively.
- * Most of interviewees (99%), ensured that blood donation is a good practice, and they reveal that due to many reasons such as: blood donation affect the health of the donor positively, since donation activate blood circulation, and involved in saving lives especially who needs regular blood transfusion like thalssemia patients.
- * Low percentage (4%) of the interviewees object receiving blood unit, despite that their doctor’s recommendation, due to fear of transfusion process (mostly repeated), not trusting the given blood units.
- * Majority of the interviewees (94%) express their readiness to donate blood for the family members. They refer that to: assisting relatives. On the other hand 6% of the interviewees object donating blood to family members due to fear of the process and disease transmission.
- * 10% of the interviewees indicated that saving blood unit in the blood bank is useless, and they reveal that due to many reasons which reveal lack of knowledge such as: “blood will be contaminated and spoiled if it remains for long time in the blood bank”, “ Fresh blood is better”. On the other hand some indicated that blood bank will sale the donated blood units.
- * One fifth of the interviewees (20%) ever donated blood, of them 42% are males and 6% are females.

- * About 37% of the interviewees never donated blood due to medical reasons, while 29% of them reveal being fear of AIDS infection, and 19% due to aging.
- * Half of the interviewees indicated that person could donate blood twice a year, while 12% shows that the person could donate three times and more each year.
- * 22% of the interviewees indicated that they heard about National Blood Transfer Services (Blood Bank). Relative and friends were the main source of hearing about (75%), followed by Mass media mainly TV (73%).