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Editorial

Accreditation program for blood banking and cell therapy services – a defining moment in the expansion and qualification of Brazilian services



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The Associação Brasileira de Hematologia, Hemoterapia e Terapia Celular (ABHH) and the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), previously called the American Society of Blood Banks, have been working together since 2011 to develop a joint accreditation program for blood banking and transfusion, and cell therapy services based on the AABB standards.

The program is an accreditation model with international standards designed by these two institutions to maintain and improve the quality and safety of blood transfusion, tissue transplantation and cell therapy activities carried out by services in Brazil.

Started in 2006, the stages of the project were jointly designed by the two organizations with the aim of transforming the services into an innovative and exemplary business. The initial agreement was signed during the Brazilian Congress of Hematology, Hematology and Cell Therapy (Hemo 2011) in November 2011 with the goal of developing the AABB/ABHH Accreditation Program for Blood Banking and Transfusion Services.

The program was officially launched in Brazil at Hemo 2012. At this time, the partnership was expanded to include cell therapy, thus giving rise to the Accreditation Program for Cellular Therapy Services with the aim of guaranteeing the

quality and safety of collection, processing, storage and clinical administration of cell therapy products.

At the moment, several centers are preparing for accreditation. By the end of 2015, there will be 15 new accredited transfusion and cell therapy services. Two centers have already been accredited, BIOTEC and the Hemocentro de São Paulo, and three others are already scheduled for accreditation: the Hemocentro coordenador do Estado do Pará – HEMOPA, Hemocentro Coordenador do estado de Santa Catarina – HEMOSC and the Hemocentro Coordenador do Estado de Minas Gerais – Hemominas. The accreditation of ten other blood banks and cell therapy centers are being negotiated with a high probability of approval.

We know it is going to be tough for the accreditation system to go forward in Brazil due to the necessary cultural changes. The accreditation process requires small adjustments but, in general, it is satisfactory. The offices of the ABHH are in constant contact in order to minimize the difficulties of achieving accreditation thus achieving more than satisfactory results with accreditation cases being discussed and put into practice with further adjustments where necessary.

For the ABHH, accreditation is a key to the evolution of the quality of Brazilian transfusion and cell therapy services and

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blood banks. The country has the privilege of having this program whose solidity, credibility and international acceptance is guaranteed by both the ABHH and the AABB thus allowing 'AABB standards' to be translated and adapted to Brazilian conditions. Brazil is currently the only country in the world that has this partnership and the experience has served as a model for the expansion of AABB accreditation to the international arena. We at the ABHH are proud to be the pioneers in

this area and we thank all those who believed and contributed to the success of the program, which will surely expand rapidly over the coming years.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.