


Dear Editor,

West Nile Virus in Blood Donors
I have read the recent report on “A Study of West Nile Virus Infection in Iranian Blood Donors” with great interest.1 Sharifi et al. concluded that: “In order to increase the safety of blood donation, it is essential to continue surveillance of this emerging infection in order to protect the blood supply in the future.”1 I have some concerns on this work. The conclusion is not related to the negative findings. There is no evidence pointing to the need of continuous surveillance of the infection. Indeed, there are many reports from several countries indicating the null prevalence of the West Nile virus infection among blood donors.2 It is no doubt that West Nile virus can be transmitted via blood transfusions. However, the cost effectiveness of performing such routine tests is questionable. A good suggestion might be a strict pre-donor screening which focuses on risk factors and travelling history to endemic areas. The implementation of routine screening might be useful only if a disease epidemic is confirmed.

References

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Reply,

Your letter to the editor at Archives of Iranian Medicine was forwarded to me.

Thank you for your concern. The implementation of routine screening for West Nile virus infection among blood donors is not recommended. I agree with your suggestion that a strict pre-donor screening focusing on risk factors and travelling history to endemic areas is essential.

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