

Blood transfusions have saved millions of lives, but what is often forgotten is that they can take lives, too. Currently, there are internationally established guidelines for safe blood transfusions, but nations sometimes ignore these measures, which puts their patients at risk for sepsis, anaphylactic shock, and death. According to the Joint United Kingdom Blood Transfusion and Tissue Transplantation Services Professional Advisory Committee, "Most mistransfusion incidents are caused by identification errors at the time of pre-transfusion blood sampling, sample handling in the laboratory, collecting the wrong component from the blood bank or transfusion to the patient." The majority of these incidents result in catastrophic consequences, most of which can be averted with strict protocols surrounding blood transfusions and nations' compliance with the regulations. According to the World Health Organization, 128 nations have established guidelines for blood transfusions, primarily in high-income countries, such as France, Norway, and more. This statistic must be increased drastically to provide citizens across the globe with sufficient blood products and the protocols to keep them safe when doing so.

The United Nations (UN) has assumed a vital role in the mission to set blood transfusion guidelines globally. In fact, the UN adopted the Global Plan for Action on Safety of Blood, Tissue and Organs, which provides guidelines to countries on how to ensure safe, accessible, and high-quality blood transfusions. The plan has resulted in significant improvements across the globe – in the three-year period after the plan was adopted, an estimated 1.8 million additional people had access to safe blood products. Furthermore, the UN has developed the World Health Organization's Guidelines on the Quality and Safety of Blood Components, which provides detailed instructions on how to ensure ethical transfusions are performed. Alongside the UN, several non-governmental organizations have been working to regulate guidelines to ensure patients' safety. For example, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have been involved in strengthening the safety of donated blood by implementing guidelines for the safe transfusion of blood worldwide. Altogether, the United Nations strives for a future in which patients can safely receive the blood they need without the risk of neglectful anomalies.

The People's Republic of China has taken significant steps to ensure the safe and ethical practice of blood transfusions. For instance, the Chinese Ministry of Health released a document in 2003 titled "Safety Standards for Blood Transfusion," setting national standards for blood donation. This document was amended in 2009 to include "The Regulations on Blood Collection, Processing and Transfusion," which outlines safety measures such as testing for blood-borne pathogens and obtaining informed consent from the patient. In addition, the Chinese government established the National Blood Transfusion Safety Committee to oversee the implementation of these guidelines and to review practices nationwide. Furthermore, China adopted a nationwide quality control system to ensure that donated blood is safe and of high quality. As a result, blood donations in China have increased significantly, with an estimated 14 million donations in 2018, up from 6 million in 2008. This has allowed China to build up a large supply of donated blood, providing an increased safety margin for blood transfusions across the country. Ultimately, the People's Republic of China has assumed a large responsibility to establish protocols for blood transfusions and strongly urges other nations to join the movement.