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Blood borne infections – A continued public health threat

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Abstract

Patients with bleeding disorders, clotting disorders, or hemoglobinopathies commonly undergo blood transfusions. Despite safer blood supply in the past 20 years with improved blood banking techniques, risk of transmission of known pathogens such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HTLV 1 persists. Among allogeneic blood donations, the prevalence rates of infection markers for hepatitis C virus (HCV) and hepatitis B virus have decreased over time, although rates for markers of HIV and human T-cell lymphotropic virus did not. In addition, incidence of emerging pathogens is steadily increasing. Most of these emerging pathogens have a long incubation period and are resistant to pathogen inactivation mechanisms. Pathogens such as Babesia, Dengue virus, and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) are some of the notorious emerging agents that are increasingly causing this threat due to lack of active interventions. Detecting window period infections is a challenge that contributes to the inadequacy of the existing screening processes. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses surveillance systems to monitor blood product safety for persons with blood disorders. These systems may provide a foundation to develop ways to increase the likelihood that the emerging pathogens can be identified with increased efficiency.

Biography

Dr. Madhuri Sopirala, MD, MPH, FACP is an Infectious Diseases Epidemiologist in the role of Medical Director of Infection Control and Antimicrobial Stewardship at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center. She is an Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. She has trained in Infectious Diseases at the Ohio State University (OSU) Medical Center and obtained her Master's in Public Health (MPH) degree from OSU. She served as the hospital epidemiologist and faculty of Infectious diseases at OSU for several years. She has several publications in reputed journals on the epidemiology of infectious diseases.