Ebola crisis: WAA advises preparedness to fight epidemic outbreaks

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

In 2014 the Ebola outbreak in some central African countries resulted in many thousands of people being infected, an approximate 50 percent mortality rate and to date, over 7,000 deaths.

In many areas, where local health systems were inadequate to face the challenge, the only support was provided by international non-profit organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, Emergency and others, who were effective in reducing the death toll.

Furthermore, in many instances several infected individuals survived Ebola thanks to appropriate, even if somewhat empirical, supportive treatment. The latter included antibiotics, hydration and hemocomponent support, including plasma collected from convalescent patients either by processing whole blood units or, when the collection was performed in more industrialized countries, by using donor apheresis devices (http://www.who.int Use of Convalescent Whole Blood or Plasma Collected from Patients Recovered from Ebola Virus Disease for Transfusion, as an Empirical Treatment during Outbreaks).

WAA letter to WHO

For the WAA, this raised the question: what role could be played in this field by an international scientific society? As reported by Olivier Garraud, current WAA secretary, on behalf of the whole WAA board (World Apheresis Association letter to the WHO: the World Apheresis Association urges the development of preparedness plans to make specific plasma available when urgently needed, Transfus Apher Sci. 2014 Dec;51(3): 2-3) our intervention should be aimed at increasing local professional skills and preparedness to fight epidemic outbreaks, at least by ensuring adequate and effective medical treatment including transfusion support.

Needless to say, all of the preceding is costly, and will require financial support by both national and international authorities. It will also require training of local health personnel.

The latter should be one of our tasks, and I consider it worthwhile to foster this aim, possibly with the support of companies operating in the field. It may seem ambitious, but I think that it should be considered of general interest both from a scientific and an economic point of view.

In fact, if we were to estimate all of the Ebola epidemic-related costs (medical interventions from abroad, sanitary controls performed at customs around the world, etc) it would surely be less costly to set up and improve appropriate and efficient task forces.

Finally, I would remind you all that the next WAA meeting will be held in the magnificent city of Paris in April, 2016.

The scientific committee will include representatives from FSH, ESFH and the WAA and will soon begin drafting the preliminary program. Your suggestions and proposals about possible topics and arguments are welcome!

On behalf of the whole WAA board, I wish you all the best for 2015!

Sincerely yours,
Paolo Perseghin, MD
President WAA
Our sixteen member-organizations of the WAA (alphabetically) are:

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The WAA Board representative of each association, is listed on the left side of the front cover.
The French Society for Hemapheresis (SFH) is enthusiastic about the 2016 event to be held in Paris.

One of the most important sessions, organized by the National Institute of Blood Transfusion (INTS), was a session on “Permanent Education” which is compulsory in France.

At the 15th International WAA/ASFA Joint Congress, held in San Francisco in 2014, the WAA board approved the French society’s candidacy for the organization of the upcoming WAA 16th International Congress in Paris.

The 15th national congress of the SFH was successfully held in Paris at the “Maison Internationale” December 10-12, 2014. During the three-day congress, the newest advances in the field of Hemapheresis were presented.

The 2016 WAA/SFH 16th International Joint Congress will be held at the René Descartes Medical University “Les Cordeliers” in the heart of Paris’ “Quartier Latin”, April 27-29, 2016. The City Council of Paris welcomes congress attendees and supports our congress.

The congress program will include:

- educational sessions for nurses and physicians,
- permanent education sessions,
- scientific and practical sessions,
- clinical trial sessions,
- sessions about apheresis activities around the world
- apheresis techniques and
- several industrial symposia will also be scheduled.

A congress award, the Abel-Rowntree-Turner Award, will be presented for the best abstract from a young investigator.

Welcome to Paris!  
Save the date: “April 27-29, 2016”
Dear WAA Members,

The 10th ISFA Congress will be held in Cancun, Mexico from May 13 – 16, 2015. With the support of our new officers, board of trustees, and members we plan on an exciting meeting. Topics will include:

- apheresis therapy for the Ebola virus,
- apheresis for elevated Lp(a), and
- selective apheresis for C-RP in acute ischemia and inflammation.

Additionally, the congress will partner with the Asociacion Mexicana de Medicina Transfusional AC (AMMTAC) and will collaborate with other apheresis organizations to further advance the science and participants.

Together, we can work toward fulfilling the vision of medicine established by Hippocrates in the 5th century B.C.: 

"Medicine is the art of addition and subtraction. The subtraction of all that is excessive, and the addition of all that is missing. And he who might be the best at doing this – will be the best doctor."

Warm regards,
Patrick M. Moriarty, MD
President, ISFA

ISFA 2015 10th Congress hosted in Cancun, Mexico

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ABOUT ISFA

ISFA is the only one international society for apheresis mainly composed of individual members. Founded in 1996 to disseminate the most up-to-date apheresis technologies and their clinical applications so that all may benefit from the effort of ISFA. Almost 500 members from all over the world belong to ISFA.

The main objectives of ISFA is to disseminate on an international basis the most up-to-date apheresis technologies and their clinical applications so that all may benefit from the efforts of ISFA.

ISFA 2015 10th International Society for Apheresis Congress

13 - 16 May 2015 | Cancun, Mexico

ISFA

ISFA FOR APHERESIS

https://www.e-isfa.org
Activities, initiatives and news

The European Society of Artificial Organs represents various members and occupations that are involved in this area of medicine. This includes industry members (Baxter, Braun, Berlin Heart, Circulite, Fresenius Medical Care, Gambro) that have the possibility to interact in science and clinical practise with members of the ESAO. ESAO also endorses cooperation with other societies and individuals interested in this field.

We are happy to include many new, and notably also many young members, who bring a new spirit into our activities.

Our next annual meeting will be held in Leuwen Belgium, September 2-5, 2015, with Congress President Bart Meyns. We welcome participants and exhibitors from around the world. The abstract deadline is March 22, 2015. More information and a link can be found on our home page: www.esao.org.

ESAO holds several working groups on different topics such as Heart, Liver, Tissue Engineering, Uremic Toxins and Apheresis. There are specific awards for young ESAO members and pre-congress seminars will be held for those at the beginning of their research career. Winter school activities are arranged to allow interactive bridging between various fields of expertise.

International Registry

The Apheresis Working Group focuses on participation in the WAA-driven online registry for apheresis procedures and clinical outcomes. It contains data entered by cooperative groups of people from various centres around the world, performing any type of apheresis.

The working group activity includes clinicians and technicians and nurses from around the world all of whom are involved in registering data from these various apheresis procedures.

Participation in this registry is free of charge and enables each centre to get their own feedback back by downloading their own data files and reports. To gain access, a centre has to register at www.waa-registry.org

Currently, over 58,000 apheresis procedures have been registered, for more than 20 different treatment procedures. Common publications are made based on various registered data.

The next abstract (sent to the ESAO 2015) will cover the extent of adverse events that arise by substitution of various types of plasma, albumin and HES.

The Apheresis Working Group has time allotted at the ESAO congress in addition to the other apheresis presentations made during the ESAO congress.

Topics of apheresis in other fields, such as liver failure and sepsis are also included in the field of interest of ESAO as well as biological devices for apheresis. Stem cell transplantation in organ damage such as heart failure or other topics are also addressed.

The previous Wichtig Award winner, Julia Jung from Rostock Germany, won the prize based on research of cell development and implementation for cardiac rhythm regulation.

The WAA governor, on behalf of ESAO, is Prof. Volker Witt from the Pediatric Centre, St Anna, Vienna University Hospital, Austria.

If you are not a member of ESAO you are heartily welcome to register (www.esao.org).

Sincerely,

Bernd Stegmayr
President of ESAO
The Hellenic Haemapheresis Society

The Hellenic Haemapheresis Society welcomes the opportunity to publish the activities of our organization in this edition of the World Apheresis Association Newsletter.

Our main activities are the organization of scientific events, a workshop or conference held on alternating years, as well as recording the annual apheresis sessions of all our hospital units.

2014 Meeting and New Board of Directors
The 5th Conference of the Hellenic Haemapheresis Society was held June 27 and 28, 2014 in Athens. Apart from the registry data for the years 2012 - 2013, we also discussed new developments in the field of apheresis.

During the Conference we held elections to appoint the new Board of Directors: President: John Dervenoulas; Vice President: Eirini Grapsa; General Secretary: Panayiotis Karmas; Executive Secretary: Panagiota Douramani; Treasurer: Vassilios Tsevrenis; Members: Maria Kritsioti and Panagiotis Tsirigotis.

June meeting in Athens to focus on TMAs
Our next meeting will be held in Athens, on June 20, 2015. The subject of this Workshop will be the pathophysiology and management of Thrombotic Microangiopathies (TMA).

Plans for a HUS/TTP registry for Greece
We are also planning to set up a registry for all HUS/TTP cases in Greece.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings.

Sincerely,
John Dervenoulas, President

Hellenic Haemapheresis Society

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Email : hha@hha.com.gr

www.hha.com.gr
The year 2014 has been important for the European Society for Haemapheresis (ESFH) for the number of activities and their consequences. The 2nd International Joint Meeting ESFH-SIdEM was held in Florence, May 19 – 22, 2014.

Over 300 attendees came from all over Europe and gathered in Florence to review the latest developments in therapeutic and donor apheresis and to discuss the role of cellular therapy in the treatment of several disorders.

It started with an Opening Remarks session presented by the two Congress Presidents, Prof. A. Bossi and Dr. M. Lozano, followed by a Plenary Session where Dr. Gail Rock revisited the role of clinical apheresis.

During the meeting in Florence, the General Assembly of the ESFH was held. There, the new bylaws of the society proposed by the Board, after the public consultation period, were approved by the attendees.

The main modification of the new Bylaws was the change of the name of the Society to “European Society for Haemapheresis”.

Another modification to the Bylaws was the creation of a new Board position for a representative of the nursing group of the Society. At the Assembly Ms. Ingrid E.M. de Beer-Wekking was appointed as the first nurse representative on the board.

Also at the meeting, Dr. Miguel Lozano was elected as the new President of ESFH. In his initial speech he thanked the Society for the election and also recognized the task of the former president Dr. Hans Vrielink.

During the Florence meeting there were several discussions regarding the need to develop Standards for Therapeutic Apheresis Units. This was initiated in Italy by the Italian Society of Apheresis and Cellular Manipulation (SIdEM) and was reviewed by the Spanish Apheresis Group. It was proposed that given the importance of the topic, ESFH might consider developing a set of Standards for Therapeutic Apheresis Units in Europe.
Dear WAA Members,

The American Society for Apheresis (ASFA) would like to invite you to our 2015 Annual Meeting to be held in San Antonio, Texas at the Grand Hyatt, May 6-9, 2015.

The theme for this year is Infectious Disease & Apheresis. The committee chaired by ASFA President-Elect, Eileen Karr, has put together a cutting edge series of Scientific Symposia, Education Sessions, Oral and Poster Abstract Presentations, and Interactive Case Studies and Discussions that will make your trip worthwhile. There will also be Corporate Symposia and Tutorials, committee meetings and receptions, and the annual networking opportunity in the exhibit hall.

For the second time since 2012, ASFA will host a consensus conference on May 5, 2015 in San Antonio on Red Cell Exchange in Sickle Cell Disease as a pre-meeting activity. Attendees at the conference will be given a thorough understanding of the definition, pathophysiology, diagnosis and management of sickle cell disease obtained through consensus amongst the world’s leading experts. Please make sure you register for this event in addition to registering for the annual meeting. For more information on the above, please visit our website at www.apheresis.org.

ASFA has been working on many new and exciting activities:

- In April 2014, we held our 35th Annual Meeting in conjunction with the 15th International Congress of the World Apheresis Association (WAA) in San Francisco. The meeting was a great success with approximately 550 participants from 35 different countries.
- We partnered with the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Board of Certification (BOC) to develop an Apheresis Practitioner Qualification (APQ), to be launched in late 2015. More details will be added to our website throughout the year.
- We published the 5th edition of the Principles of Apheresis Technology – Technical Principles of Apheresis Medicine Textbook in April 2014. This book gives a basic overview of the theory and application of apheresis and is a great resource for all apheresis practitioners.
- ASFA partnered with the UC San Diego School of Medicine to co-sponsor the Essentials and Advances in Apheresis Therapies for their 2nd annual program in 2014, and will partner once again this March. Similarly, we have worked with the University of Virginia School of Medicine to co-sponsor the Therapeutic Apheresis Academy every fall for several years.

More recently, ASFA has furthered partnerships with other medical organizations whose members are involved in apheresis such as AABB, the American Academy of Neurology (AAN), ASCP, the American Society of Hematology (ASH), the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), and the World Apheresis Association (WAA).

As a service for apheresis practitioners everywhere, ASFA continues to publish informational documents available on www.apheresis.org, including the 2015 Apheresis Reimbursement Guide and the TTP Consensus Conference Summary publication.

ASFA is working on many more exciting activities – so please visit our website, attend our educational programs, or contact us to learn more. We hope to see you at the ASFA 2015 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas!

Best regards,

Marisa B. Marques, MD
President
American Society For Apheresis
The Turkish Society of Apheresis (TSA) was established in the year 2000 as a non-profit organization. Currently, TSA has more than 100 members from different disciplines of medicine, including physicians, apheresis technicians and nurses.

The main purpose of our association is to broaden the knowledge and proper application of apheresis science, to support education and multi center studies in Turkey and to encourage multidisciplinary communication between colleagues.

Standardization, education and institutionalization are important aspects of TAS. Our society has made great contributions to the preparation of the Turkish Therapeutic Apheresis Centers Guide, which was published in March, 2010. As of March 2015, we have 72 therapeutic apheresis centers and 12 education centers of therapeutic apheresis in our country.

Between 2010 and 2013, a total of 44 physicians and 297 apheresis technicians/ nurses were certified in therapeutic apheresis. In 2014, more than 20,000 therapeutic apheresis procedures, including approximately 5,000 hematopoietic progenitor cell apheresis procedures were performed in Turkey.

In order to facilitate and standardize data collection, we are planning to establish a TAS-sponsored central therapeutic apheresis database by the end of 2015. Another important project of the TSA will be a prospective, national thrombotic microangiopathy registry, which will be active soon.

Since its foundation, the TSA has organized more than 60 national apheresis courses, 9 national apheresis meetings, the 15th European Hemapheresis ESFH Congress in 2005, and the 14th International Congress of the World Apheresis Association in 2012.

The upcoming 10th national meeting will be held in Istanbul, November 5—8, 2015. During our 2015 meeting we will organize an apheresis course for technical staff, a transfusion course for physicians and a hematopoietic cell transplantation course for nurses.

We invite all colleagues who are interested in apheresis science, to take part in this scientific journey in the fascinating city of Istanbul. For more information, we advise you to visit www.aferez2015.org.
The President and Board Members of PSHBT are proud to announce the new and improved website of the Philippine Society of Hematology and Blood Transfusion. The new and official website will now be www.pshbt.org.

The new website will feature the following:

MEMBERS ACCESS - view and read resources that are available to PSHBT members only

EVENT REGISTRATION - view and register to all PSHBT events particularly the Annual Convention

MEMBERS DIRECTORY - view Clinic locations and contact numbers of PSHBT members to be used also for lay

E-LEARNING/ONLINE EXAM - online learning and examination for PSHBT member evaluation

ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION - subscribe to email newsletter and announcements from PSHBT Secretariat

ANNOUNCEMENTS - ADVISORIES - And much more…!

NOTE: at the time of this publication, the new website has been soft-launched only, and some features and pages are still a work-in-progress.

In line with this, we would like to announce the new and official email address of the PSHBT Secretariat - secretariat@pshbt.org - kindly update your email address books and begin using this new email address.

Vision Statement of the PSHBT

A subspecialty society of globally competent, ethical and socially-responsive Filipino adult and pediatric hematologists committed to the prevention of, and care of people with hematologic disorders in order to attain optimum health and well-being of people in the Philippines.

PSHBT Mission Statement

The PSHBT is committed to the prevention and care of people with hematologic disorders by empowering its members and the public, both medical and non-medical, through training and research, service and education.

 Philippine Society of Hematology and Blood Transfusion

PSHBT Secretariat Address:
Rm 1404, 14/F North Wing CHBC
Quezon City
Email: secretariat@pshbt.org    website: http://www.pshbt.org
The Italian Society of Hemapheresis and Cell Manipulation (SIdEM), was founded in 2004 as a direct heir of the SIdE (Italian Society of Hemapheresis), which since the 1980s had represented the leading experts of Italian apheresis techniques and clinical applications, both in the productive and therapeutic settings.

Governance
Today the SIdEM Governance is led by:
- the President,
- a Board of Directors consisting of seven physicians and one representative of the health professions, and
- a Scientific Committee of nationally and internationally recognized apheresis experts.

Interdisciplinary collaboration
The SIdEM has always been characterized by its interdisciplinary value. Specifically in recent years, scientific partnerships have been established with the Italian Group of Bone Marrow Transplantation (GITMO), the Study Group for Blood Saving Strategies (ANEMO), the Italian Society of Nephrology (SIN) and the Italian Nursing Group in Stem Cell Mobilisation and Apheresis (GIIMA). SIdEM has shared conference events, as well as scientific and organizational objectives with each of these groups.

Ongoing studies
Study groups currently operating within SIdEM are:
- Pediatric Therapeutic Apheresis
- National Registry of Therapeutic Apheresis
- Non-extensive Stem Cell Manipulation
- Italian Review of the reimbursement rates of therapeutic apheresis procedures

The Study Group of Pediatric Therapeutic Apheresis includes the major Italian Centers that apply apheresis procedures in this population: most of these procedures find their rationale within hematology (collection of peripheral blood stem cells, extracorporeal photochemotherapy post-allogeneic BMT), but also for other emerging indications (e.g., plasma exchange in autoimmune encephalitis).

Quality standards development
Through collaboration with a group of experts, SIdEM has developed a set of requirements deemed necessary for a Therapeutic Apheresis Unit to guarantee quality standards. These requirements, compiled in a document entitled "Standards for Therapeutic Apheresis Unit", have been recently proposed to some Italian Centers operating in this setting, in order to achieve validation, and with the hope that these Standards may also be recognized at the institutional level.

Every year SIdEM offers a national scientific event (a Congress/Course), as well as several local Meetings in Italy: the National Congress is held every two years, and the next one is scheduled April 15-18, 2015, in Bari.

The planned topics are:
1. Hematopoietic stem cells: graft outcome, immunologic recovery
2. Cell therapy for relapsing post-transplantation disease
3. Extracorporeal photochemotherapy/Photopheresis: current state and perspectives
4. Future of cord blood banking
5. Productive and Therapeutic Apheresis productive
6. Current practice and perspectives in the analysis of CD34+ cells
7. Inactivation of pathogen agents
8. Blood components for non-transfusional applications
9. Controversies in Transfusion Medicine and Hematology
The Indian Society for Apheresis
Growing society active on many fronts

ISA EXECUTIVE
President
Rakesh Srivastava
Vice-President
A. Lalchandani
Secretary
S.N. Haldar
Treasurer
B. Banerjee

For further information on the ISA organization please Email: rs6434444@hotmail.com

The Indian Society for Apheresis (ISA) was established in 1987. The ISA is a group of physicians, scientists, nurses, technicians, corporate bodies and other responsible citizens of the country who are interested or active in the field of apheresis.

In 2015, the ISA continues to progress steadily with a current membership of 248.

Apheresis services and R & D growth
Presently, we are actively involved in expansion of apheresis services and research and development in the field of therapeutic apheresis in India. New Research Centers for Therapeutic Apheresis & Donor Apheresis are being established in more cities this year.

A library was set up for professionals and the public. An internet center has been established for the benefit of students, medical fraternity and patients.

Research center attracts patients
Development of the ISA Apheresis & Medical Research Center is a constant process with ever increasing scientific developments in the field. This center is already attracting a large number of national and international patients because of its efficiency, economics and quality.

Currently, controlled trials are underway for the treatment of scleroderma, ulcerative colitis, bronchial asthma and ankylosing spondylitis to study the efficacy of apheresis in these and other routine indications.

The ISA is also on the way to conduct and monitor clinical trials for new medical devices and in the treatment of HIV, HCV, Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever and other oncology-related disorders and complications.

The ISA has served as a consultant to the Indian government on issues related to policy planning and the implementation of apheresis.

Public education and awareness:
Active socio-medical work involving the organization of public lectures, seminars, video shows and free medical camps is also being done.

Field workers and health educators of ISA are participating in a community health education program. Presently, our priority programs are fundraising and resource mobilization to permit us to achieve our scientific and humanitarian goals.

ISA coordinates training programs
The ISA is currently coordinating a program that will provide training courses in apheresis with the help of I.A.A. hospitals in a northern Indian state as a new state chapter. An apheresis scientist exchange program is already active. The Indian Journal of Apheresis, a twice-yearly publication, is in circulation.

2015 Annual Scientific Meeting
Lallgarh Palace Hotels
Bikaner (Rajasthan)
August, 2015

“The meeting will feature a wide variety of presentations by eminent and invited speakers from the country and overseas.”

Next year’s annual scientific meeting will be held in August at Lallgarh Palace Hotels, Bikaner (Rajasthan).

This meeting will have a wide variety of presentations by eminent and invited speakers from the country and overseas.

Rakesh Srivastava,
President Indian Society for Apheresis
The Korean Society for Apheresis

Apheresis news and data update from Korea

The Korean Society for Apheresis (KSFA) was established in 1999, and holds an annual symposium in February. The Society consists of about 200 members including physicians and nurses.

The purposes of the KSFA are to foster collaborative research regarding collection, modification, removal, transfusion, transplantation, and cellular therapy of blood constituents. The Society serves as an organization for education and exchange of information and ideas concerning apheresis among its members.

Recently, the KSFA has participated in the Asian Academy of Apheresis (AAA) which is mainly organized by Dr. Motoki Yonekawa in Sapporo Hokuyu Hospital to share information among neighboring countries.

The President of KSFA is Professor Kyou-Sup Han, M.D. (kshanmd@snu.ac.kr) of the Seoul National University Hospital. The Executive of General Affairs is the Professor Hyun Ok Kim, M.D. (hyunok1019@yuhs.ac) of Yonsei University Hospital.

This year, our annual symposium, the 16th Symposium of The Korea Society for Apheresis was held on February 25, 2015 in Seoul. Agenda topics were:

1) Current status of apheresis in Korea,
2) Hematopoietic stem cell registry,
3) New Technology of therapeutic plasma exchange and its application in Europe,
4) Donor apheresis regulations: Global perspectives,
5) Plasmapheresis in a wide range of diseases: Updated guidelines,
6) Donor vein assessment for hematopoietic stem cell collection,
7) Drug removal by plasmapheresis,
8) Plasmapheresis in high immunologic risk: Focused on transplantation.

Our next annual symposium (17th Symposium of The Korean Society for Apheresis) will be held around 22 Feb 2016 in Seoul.

According to the presentation by Professor Kyou-Sup Han M.D., at the 16th Symposium of KSFA, we performed 925,195 apheresis procedures in Korea in 2014 employing about 1,000 apheresis instruments.

The majority (99%) of the procedures were done at the Blood Centers to collect plasma (719,835) and single-donor platelets (53,673). 141,653 Double-component collection (Plasma + Platelets) was also performed.

For donor plasmapheresis, PCS-2 (Haemonetics) and Auto-C (Fresenius Kabi) were equally used. For donor platelethpheresis, Amicus (Fresenius Kabi), MCS (Haemonetics), and Trima (Terumo) are being used.

In hospitals, 5,497 plasmapheresis, 3,042 hematopoietic stem cell collections, and 856 granulocyte collections were performed.

Cobe Spectra (Terumo) was the most popularly used instruments followed by Spectra Optia, Cobe 2991, CS 3000 (Kabi), MCS, Com.Tec, Plasauto-EZ (Asahi), KM8000 (Kuraray) in hospitals.

We publish a regular journal, Korean Journal of Blood Transfusion, in conjunction with the Korean Society of Blood Transfusion three times a year.
The Canadian Apheresis Group is celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2015.

On November 6, 1979, The Medical Post, a national newspaper whose target audience is physicians, published an article about the growing use of plasma exchange therapy in Canada for an increasing number of autoimmune illnesses.

The article reported on the activities and observations of eight doctors across the country, all of whom were treating patients with plasma exchange therapy. They were:

- Max Katz, Montreal Royal Victoria Hospital
- Kenneth Shumak, Toronto General Hospital
- Phillip Gordon, University of Alberta
- Lawrence Grossman, Vancouver General
- Gail Rock, Ottawa Red Cross Society
- Robert McKendry, Ottawa General Hospital
- David Sutton, Toronto Western Hospital
- Murray Urowitz, Wellesley Hospital, Toronto

The article briefly described the independent pioneering work of these doctors, each at their individual institution across the vast country, in the burgeoning practice of plasma exchange therapy in Canada. It also highlighted their very exciting and promising early results and posed some intriguing questions and observations.

The article also clearly identified the need, in the best interest of the advancement of the practice, for a collaborative structure among the practitioners to collect data and exchange ideas: this was the impetus that led to the establishment of the present-day Canadian Apheresis Group.

This group of Canadian doctors originally named their group, “The Canadian Plasma Exchange Study Group”. By 1984, the group had held four annual meetings and had firmly established a self-regulating function. It also had a full-time secretariat and several clinical trials in progress, one of which included the world’s largest data series on TTP. In the mid 1980s, the group was actively collecting data on the (about 5,000) plasma exchange procedures being done annually in Canada, and was documenting any adverse reactions.

Today, as we prepare for our 35th annual meeting to be held in September, 2015, in conjunction with the Canadian Association of Apheresis Nurses, the CAG collects data from 40 centres, on all (over 15,000) plasma exchange procedures and on all stem cell procedures in the country in a national registry; adverse reactions continue to be documented.

Each year at the annual meeting, data reports from the national registry are analyzed and discussed in scientific workshops. Guest speakers, including experts from the international community are also invited to participate in the annual event, which provides an essential networking opportunity for the Canadian practitioners who attend.

As one of the founding members of the WAA, it is with pride that the members of the CAG support the organization and look forward to working with the various member societies to share information and improve practice.

We now have the privilege of having one of our members, Dr. Bill Clark, from London Ontario, elected as the next president of the association and we look forward to an interesting and exciting next few years.
One of the ways that the World Apheresis Association meets its goals (listed, Pg 1), is through the exchange of scientific information through our official journal, Transfusion Science and Apheresis, which is also the official journal of The European Society for Haemapheresis (ESFH), the Società Italiana Di Emaferesi e Manipolazione Cellulare (SIDEM) and the Turkish Society of Apheresis (TSA).

The WAA Newsletteer

- Highlights important developments in apheresis
- Contains news from member Societies,
- Announces new member societies
- Details upcoming meetings and events
- Promotes the exchange of information
- Offers a networking opportunity for apheresis physicians and practitioners world-wide.

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WAA/SFH International Joint Congress
April 27-29, 2016

Paris

Les Cordeliers Faculty of Medicine

for information: www.waa-congress2016.org