

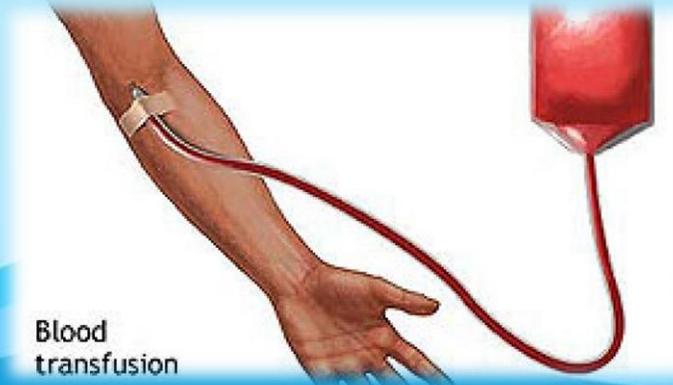
Blood Transfusion

The first ever blood transfusion attempt was estimated to have taken place in the medieval period of Europe. Surprisingly, the first attempt of blood transfusion was not carried out by a medical staff but by a barber during the war who had no medical experience at all. After witnessing plenty of wounded soldiers who were on the verge of death due to the excessive loss of blood, the barber performed blood transfusion by using the blood of sheep and horses. Unfortunately, this attempt could not save any of their lives. Although the first attempt of blood transfusion ended with miserable consequences, it had brought great enlightenment to the later generations.

In 1665, a famous physician, Richard Lower (1631 – 1691), successfully performed blood transfusion among dogs. Inspired by the successful attempt, he diverted his experiment on a human being by transfusing sheep blood into a man's body. Unfortunately, the experiment was a failure with the man passing away after the transfusion. From the incident, no one had dared to carry out any blood transfusion experiment as it concerned a person's life.



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Blood
transfusion

Blood Transfusion



After more than a century, the first successful blood transfusion on mankind was accomplished by James Blundell (1790 – 1878) in 1818. The incident started when Blundell, an obstetrician, was carrying out the process of delivery for a woman. During the process, the woman suffered post-delivery hemorrhage. Without an immediate intervention, the woman could die at any moment.

During this critical moment, Blundell recalled the successful attempt of blood transfusion among animals. He reckoned that the same idea could be applied to a person. Hence, he transfused blood from a healthy man into the woman's body. To his relief, the woman gained consciousness half an hour after the transfusion.

Ever since the success, blood transfusions have been used to save numerous lives. However, some people, who had undergone a blood transfusion, could have unexpected side effects such as a headache, chills and fever, chest tightness, shortness of breath (Polypnoea), heart failure, and even death if critical.



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Blood Transfusion



In 1900, a famous Austrian pathologist, Karl Landsteiner (1868 – 1943), discovered blood types. He proposed that each individual had different blood types of A, B, AB, or O. This discovery had thus explained why some people would have unexpected side effects after a blood transfusion. Apart from uncovering the secret of the side effects after a blood transfusion, the discovery of blood types had also contributed to the development and improvement of the technology in blood transfusion.

Food for Thought:

- ❖ New inventions or discoveries usually occur unexpectedly when people are trying hard to solve difficult problems.
- ❖ Keen observation and complex linking skills are both essential criteria for new inventions or discoveries.
- ❖ Inventors must possess an adventurous spirit.
- ❖ Inventors must understand that failure is the mother of success.



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