

# TSO Transfusion Safety Officers: An Overview

**Key Words:** TSO, Transfusion Safety Officer, Blood Management Coordinator, Subject Matter Expert

## Expected Blood Management Deliverable

---

Understand the role of the TSO in blood management at the hospital and a template Job description.

## Introduction

---

The last decade has seen a major shift in approaches applied to blood transfusion safety. Historically the focus of transfusion safety has been on the reduction of the infectious disease risk of a unit of blood. Subsequently early hemovigilance activities provided data that corroborated the notion that, despite increased testing and other interventions, recipients of transfusion continued to suffer from serious adverse events and further that the significant residual risks of transfusion were not related to infectious disease transmission but instead were related to activities taking place at the hospital. This realization precipitated a significant shift in focus in transfusion safety.

Consequently many countries have implemented broad new initiatives under the umbrella of Hemovigilance to identify and address the factors within hospitals that may cause or contribute to adverse sequel of transfusion. One of the tools that proved invaluable to these initiatives was the development of a supportive position embedded within hospitals, (equivalent in scope to that of the Infection Control Officer) usually known as the Transfusion Safety Officer (TSO). Over time some TSOs broadened the scope of their activities to include tasks related to Blood Management, thereby evolving into Transfusion Safety/Blood Management Specialists.

## Objectives of Module

---

1. Describe background and skill set of effective TSOs
  2. Define the role of the TSO in blood safety
  3. Discuss the role of the TSO in blood management
- 

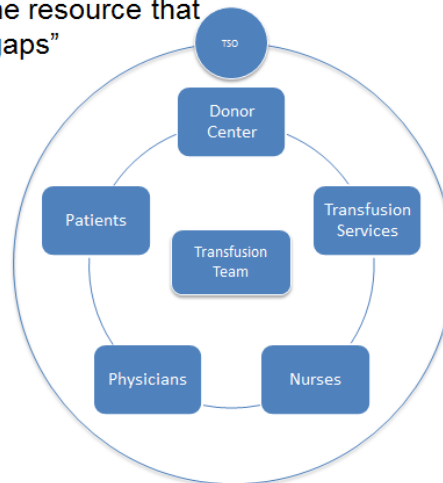
© Blood Systems. All Rights Reserved.

## What is Known

With the publication of The Joint Commission's 2009 National Patient Safety Goals and the passing of the Affordable Care Act, the concept of patient outcomes as a measure of quality both for accreditation and for reimbursement has become a major factor for hospitals and healthcare providers. Within the realm of transfusion safety, these new challenges have called for new approaches, including new roles to encompass the global nature of transfusion, an example of which is the TS/BM Specialist. The role of the TS/BM Specialist is to serve as the key individual within the hospital organization that bridges the gap between all diverse interests in blood transfusion, including the blood center, hospital transfusion service, nursing staff, medical staff, hospital administration, finance, quality, risk management and patients.

## General Purpose of a TSO

- The TSO is the resource that "bridges the gaps"



Since TS/BM Specialists serve as a global resource to their organizations and is to be seen as the system Blood Management subject matter expert, a very unique set of skills is called for, including:

- familiarity with nursing, blood banking and clinical aspects of transfusion
- familiarity with national hospital and laboratory accreditation guidelines (AABB, CAP, Joint Commission)
- understanding of the blood center collection process and guidelines
- ability to effectively communicate information to different audiences (eg physicians, administrators, laboratory, nursing, quality/risk, laypersons, patients)
- above average composition skills
- proficient in preparing and giving presentations
- a level of comfort with public speaking

© Blood Systems. All Rights Reserved.

- experience with project management
- supervisory and/or managerial experience
- facility with data collection, analysis and management
- possesses a balance of strong interpersonal and communication skills with ability to handle technical details

## Best Practices, Guidelines, and Recommendations

---

*TS/BM Specialists play an indispensable role in their institution(s) in the area of transfusion safety and as an active participant and/or leader in the organizational Blood Management Program.*

## Discussion Points

---

The TS/BM Specialist is the resource that breaks down organizational silos by bridging the gaps between the donor center, transfusion service, nursing staff, medical staff and patients to enhance the safety and appropriateness of transfusion. By definition, then, the TS/BM Specialist fills a unique position with a global perspective and scope of activities. While TS/BM Specialist roles vary hospital to hospital, a number of roles are usually assigned including:

### Transfusion Safety tasks:

- Transfusion reaction monitoring-the TS/TM Specialist
  - ✓ follows up on every reported adverse transfusion event
  - ✓ maintains a database of information to track all suspected transfusion reactions
  - ✓ identifies opportunities for education to improve recognition and treatment of adverse events
  - ✓ identifies opportunities to prevent transfusion reactions
  - ✓ acts as a resource to nurses and physicians in the identification and treatment of adverse events (ie TRALI, TACO)
- Policy and procedure review
  - ✓ Works with quality/risk to identify changes in accreditation agency requirements to amend policies and procedures
  - ✓ Identifies areas of improvement in transfusion policies and procedures
  - ✓ Develops strategies to educate staff on transfusion policies and procedures
- Compliance review-performs in-person audits to establish gaps in and in compliance with policies and procedures
- Patient education
  - ✓ Provides education to patients and family members on safety measures practiced by the hospital and blood provider
  - ✓ Provides education relative to transfusion-related risks and options
  - ✓ Provides education on transfusion options

© Blood Systems. All Rights Reserved.

- Nurse and physician education—provide education to nursing and medical staff on Transfusion-related risks, transfusion reaction identification and safe transfusion practices
- Other: informed consent review, review of transfusion orders to identify miscommunications, clerical errors, lab errors

## Blood Management tasks

- Develop a hospital blood management program
- Develop blood management program implementation strategy
- Assist in development of appropriate transfusion guidelines
- Provide nurse and physician education—provide education to nursing and medical staff on blood management and transfusion appropriateness topics
- Assure availability to serve on various applicable hospital committees, for example
  - ✓ Transfusion committee
  - ✓ Patient safety council
  - ✓ Education Council
  - ✓ Critical care committee
  - ✓ Quality management committee
  - ✓ Trauma care committee
- Compile statistics to measure progress of blood management program
  - ✓ Appropriateness of transfusion orders
  - ✓ Appropriate pre- and post- transfusion data collection (CBC, PT, etc)
  - ✓ Physician-level blood use statistics
  - ✓ DRG-related blood use statistics

## Steps to take

---

- Perform a needs assessment to determine key gaps in the hospital Blood Management Program and identify which could be addressed by a TS/BM Specialist
  - Develop a working job description of a TS/BM Specialist based on hospital needs
  - Determine the reporting structure of the TS/BM Specialist within the hospital infrastructure
  - Arrange to hire and train the TS/BM Specialist
  - Provide the TS/BM Specialist with the authority to bring about meaningful process change
  - Assess effectiveness
- 

© Blood Systems. All Rights Reserved.

## Additional Resources

---

If you have questions, or if you need additional guidance, please contact your Blood System's team.

Several Optimum TX modules might interest the reader;

- TSO Reading Materials
- Blood Utilization Review at the Hospital Committee Level
- Project Management
- Multidisciplinary teams
- Single Unit transfusions
- Initial Blood Management Rollout

See Appendix: Sample TSO Job Descriptions

## References

---

*TSO Overview:* <http://www.bloodmanagement.com/the-bleeding-edge-bulletin/what-is-a-transfusion-safety-officer-tso>  
(accessed June 5, 2012).

<http://www.blood.ca>

© Blood Systems. All Rights Reserved.

---

## Appendix

---

### SAMPLE TSO JOB DESCRIP

© Blood Systems. All Rights Reserved.