

ARAB DONOR PROJECT

Summary of Project: October 2008- April 2018

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Matching for genetic system (HLA) is a prerequisite for successful Bone Marrow and Peripheral stem cell Transplantation (BMT)/(PBSC). The frequency of these genetic markers differ between ethnic groups, therefore, the chance of finding a matched unrelated donor is much higher in the same ethnic group. Because of under representation of Arabs in the local and International registries, matched donors were located for only 10% of Arab patients in need of BMT/PBSC and has no matched donor in the family. Until 2008, only 13o Arab donors were in the Hadassah Registry. Therefore, Prof. Chaim Brautbar, Dr. Shoshan Israel and myself started a project to enlarge the number of Arab donors in the registry. I was responsible for all the preparation and field activity; preparation for the project included:

- Translation of relevant information into Arabic;
- Designing leaflets and posters and writing press releases
- Recruiting support and collaboration of Medical personnel from hospital and clinics, media representatives and community leaders in order to participate on project launching.

We launched the project on October 2008 in Nazareth hospitals, the biggest Arab town. Through all the project period, Dr. Amal Bishara presented the project to the Medical and general communities via lectures and Media. Collaboration of the community increased with time. Volunteers started to help in planning and conduction donors' drives, the support of the local Arab media, written newspapers, radio, TV and internet location was impressive, intensive, and free of charge.

Until April 2018, we recruited **37,499** new Arab donor to the Hadassah Registry in **175** donors' drives in most of the Arab communities live in Israel and few drives in the west bank, some were public and some were patients based drives. All donors were analyzed for HLA genetic system that is used to match recipients and donors for BMT, all donors are registered as well in the international registry (BMDW).

Arab donors were found to be matched with **305** patients locally and worldwide; 91 of these patients are from Arab origin and **214** non-Arab patients; **40** local Jewish patients and **174** worldwide patients. The response of the Arab donors in this stage was similar to the other donors in the registry. Of the matched Arab donors, **81** donated BM/PBSC, **45%** of them donated to Arab Patients and **55%** to non-Arab Patients.

Results presented here demonstrate that Arab donors were matched and actually donated their Marrow to Arab and Non-Arab patients locally and worldwide; indicating the beneficial effect of this project to all patients locally and worldwide and emphasizing g the need to continue this lifesaving project. .