

Dear Friend,

We are aware that our countries and the region are passing through a unprecedented public health crisis due to pandemic infections of novel-corona virus diseases-2019 (COVID-19). Almost all Asian countries including twenty AATM member countries are affected with different intensity. However, the brightest part is that our population and respective governments are fighting back this monster in collective manner. Many countries like China have shown signs of winning this battle in last few weeks.

There are serious threats to the safe blood supply during these types of pandemic situations. Though there is no evidence of COVID-19 transmission through blood, proper blood safety measures must be taken. Blood transfusion services (BTS) must take care to mitigate transmission risks to blood donors and staff. BTS must be prepared for reduced blood donors reporting and stock shortage situations. Keeping multiple hurdles in front of BTS, the Governing Council (GC) of AATM felt the urgent need for a comprehensive guideline for BTS. This is a critical document and we do not have the luxury to spend more time. Therefore, AATM-GC constituted one Technical Committee to develop a guideline on COVID-19 and BTS in earliest possible time. There were seven members from seven affected countries (Dr. C.Th Smit Sibinga, Netherlands: Chair; Dr. Zhu Yong Ming, China; Dr. Peyman Eshghi, Iran; Dr. Hind A. Alhumaidan, Saudi Arabia; Dr. Md. Ashadul Islam, Bangladesh; Dr. Nusret Nuri Solaz, Turkey; Dr. Gordana Rasovic, Montenegro; Dr. N. Choudhury, India: Member Secretary) and they were requested to complete the project within three weeks. However, The committee has complete the guidelines within 9 days. This shows the commitment of AATM members to the cause and the speed in which deliverables are placed on the table. We are pleased to enclose the final guideline for AATM members and for global community.

AATM believes in continuous service to our members and also to the global BTS community. Enclosed guideline is an preamble for quick reference. AATM Technical Committee has already started working on another elaborate "Guideline on COVID-19 and BTS" which will deal with this subject in details without reinventing the wheel. This will be in the line of Aide Memoire and we are hopeful to produce in front of you, ASAP.

Let us wish the best to the Technical Committee for speedy work!

N. Choudhury
Chair, AATM