Interview with Prof. Kenrad E. Nelson: it is important not to transmit hepatitis by transfusion

Received: 20 July 2017; Accepted: 01 August 2017; Published: 15 August 2017.
doi: 10.21037/aob.2017.08.01
View this article at: http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/aob.2017.08.01

On July 14, 2017, the Guangzhou Blood Safety Conference successfully ended, after a 2-day scientific and compact agenda. The event took place in Guangzhou, a beautiful city located in South China. With the presence of prestigious local and foreign experts from fields of blood safety, epidemiology, etc., the meeting was dedicated to providing comprehensive in-depth, detailed overview of new, controversial, challenging themes, advances, and inspirations in blood safety.

As a distinguished invited speaker, Prof. Kenrad E. Nelson, Professor of epidemiology and medicine from the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA, gave an excellent presentation on the topic "*HEV and Blood Safety*", which was well received by the audience (*Figure 1*).

International meetings are always good chances for us to catch up with our editorial board members, authors and friends. This time, we were glad to take the chance to meeting with Prof. Nelson and had the honor to conduct a brief interview with him (*Figure 2*).

Figure 1 Snapshot of Prof. Nelson's presentation.

The significance to include hepatitis E virus (HEV) in the screening of blood donors

In recent years, there are many researches on HEV in field of transfusion. When talking about the necessity to include HEV in the screening of blood donors, Prof. Nelson thinks it's important to do so. A large number of donors have been screened to find evidence of hepatitis E infection and they are always found the proportion to be positive. Therefore, through the screening of blood donors, we know that in the population there's proportion of people who are infected. Because a large number of people receive blood transfusion, there's a risk that they would get blood from the donor who is healthy and doesn't have clinical hepatitis, but has an infection. So, including HEV in the screening of blood donors is very significant.

Screening pregnant women is a good way to block hepatitis B

As we know, China has a high prevalence of hepatitis B. Prof. Nelson believes that screening pregnant women and screening the general population are good ways to block hepatitis B. It is important not to transmit hepatitis by transfusion. Prof. Nelson mentioned that the important epidemiology is responsible for the large number of carriers. Therefore, screening pregnant women would be useful and treating pregnant women who are carriers with anti-virus compounds could reduce the level of virus, which can prevent transmission to the infants to some extent.

The necessity of doing related researches on hepatitis C virus (HCV)

At the end of our interview, Prof. Nelson addressed that doing related researches on HCV is very important. Prof. Nelson doesn't believe that just treating people with drugs will be sufficient to control this epidemic, because people

Figure 2 Photo with Prof. Kenrad Nelson. From left to right: editor Julia Wang, Prof. Kenrad Nelson, editor Jessie Zhong.

Figure 3 Interview with Prof. Kenrad E. Nelson: it is important not to transmit hepatitis by transfusion (1).
Available online: http://www.asvide.com/articles/1639

need to do something to prevent new cases from occurring. People now are not able to control hepatitis C epidemic, and in order to do that, they need research and study to find out the best way to prevent this epidemic.

Let's enjoy the video (*Figure 3*)!

Interview questions

- ❖ Firstly, would you like to briefly introduce yourself to our readers?
- ❖ There are many researches on HEV in field of transfusion. How do you think about the necessity and possibility to include HEV in the screening of blood donors?
- ❖ As we know, China has a high prevalence of hepatitis B. What do you think is the most important approach to block it?
- ❖ Some people think there is no need to do related researches on HCV, because of the satisfactory efficacy of anti-viral drugs. Do you agree with that?

Expert's brief introduction

Dr. Nelson is currently a professor of epidemiology, International Health and Medicine at Johns Hopkins University Medical Institutions in Baltimore, USA. He received an MD from Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago, USA. His research is focused on the epidemiology, prevention of treatment of infectious diseases. His special interest is in HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. He has active research projects currently in Thailand, China, Taiwan, Bangladesh and the Republic of Georgia. He has been the author or co-author of 481 scientific papers and three books, including "*Infectious Diseases Epidemiology*: *Theory and Practice*". He was awarded an honorary Dr. PH degree from Chiang Mai University in Thailand in 1994.

Acknowledgments

Funding: None.

Footnote

Provenance and Peer Review: This article was commissioned by the editorial office, *Annals of Blood* for the series "Meet the Professor". The article did not undergo external peer review.

Conflicts of Interest: Both authors have completed the ICMJE uniform disclosure form (available at http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/aob.2017.08.01). The series "Meet the Professor" was commissioned by the editorial office without any funding or sponsorship. The authors report that they are full-time employees of AME Publishing Company. The authors have no other conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all

aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

doi: 10.21037/aob.2017.08.01
Cite this article as: Lian H, Wang J. Interview with Prof. Kenrad E. Nelson: it is important not to transmit hepatitis by transfusion. Ann Blood 2017;2:11.

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1. Lian H, Wang J. Interview with Prof. Kenrad E. Nelson: it is important not to transmit hepatitis by transfusion. Asvide 2017;4:327. Available online: http://www.asvide.com/articles/1639

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