

Interview with Prof. Paul Ness: to ask more, think more, make more friends and never stop learning

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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. Paul Ness, Director of the Transfusion Medicine Division at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, gave an excellent presentation on the topic “Pathogen inactivation and blood safety”, which was well received by the audience (*Figure 1*).

During the meeting, we were honored to conduct a brief interview with Prof. Paul Ness (*Figure 2*). During our interview, Prof. Ness summarized some main points of his presentation, including the significance of pathogen reduction and components of blood safety. He aimed to potentially make blood transfusion safer, in terms of not only infectious complication, but also some immunologic complications of transfusion.

When speaking of the advantages and challenges of pathogen inactivation, Prof. Ness addressed that pathogen reduced platelets have been approved by the US FDA and they can use pathogen inactivation technology, including plasma component pathogen inactivation. What’s more, when introducing some new technologies into transfusion, the cost can be very important and can also be a challenge, based on the limited budget.

As to difference between Chinese and American blood centers, Prof. Ness thinks that Chinese blood centers have made many great progress, seeing from the new testing programs, liberalization of donors requirement, and increasing reliance of volunteer donors, etc. Also, he doesn’t see as much presence in the Chinese hospitals of transfusion specialists who work with the blood center to deal with the patients’ problems, which is different from the situation in US.



Figure 1 Snapshot of Prof. Paul Ness’ presentation.



Figure 2 Prof. Paul Ness and Editor Jessie Zhong.

During the past years, Prof. Ness has been active in providing support for establishment or management of international programs in transfusion in Asia and Africa. Meanwhile, he also has great passion in training residents and fellows, many of whom have gone on to highly distinguished careers in transfusion medicine. He’s been very seasoned in teaching and training. His advice for young experts is, to ask more questions, to go to some places for training where you can meet multiple different people, who you can learn a lot from, and never stop learning.

As we know, Prof. Ness has been serving as the Editor-



Figure 3 Interview with Prof. Paul Ness: to ask more, think more, make more friends and never stop learning (1).

Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1668>

in-Chief of *Transfusion* for about 15 years, during which he pushed the development of the journal, and witnessed it becoming a high-impact platform in field of transfusion. By the end of our interview, we asked about Prof. Ness' opinions for young journals to better develop into a robust platform. He thinks the core is, to figure out where the gap is in the readership between journals, what types of themes can be published to make people think in different ways and different perspectives to deal with the problems that people will face in China and overall, and therefore to build strong connection with readers

Let's enjoy the interview video! Available online: <https://v.qq.com/x/page/u0529ud7e1b.html> (Figure 3).

Interview questions

- (I) Would you like to briefly introduce yourself, your specialties and interests to our readers?
- (II) You had an excellent presentation on the topic "Pathogen inactivation and blood safety" today. Would you like to summarize some main points with us?
- (III) China has not applied pathogen inactivation so far due to various limitations. Would you like to talk about its advantages and challenges?
- (IV) Comparing Chinese and American blood centers, what do you think are their characteristics and advantages respectively?
- (V) Would you like to talk about your experiences in establishing or sustaining international programs in transfusion in Asia and Africa?
- (VI) I read from an interview that your primary interest is engineer. What encouraged you to make the decision

to focus on medicine?

- (VII) What would be your piece of advice for young experts?
- (VIII) What's the core competence of the journal *Transfusion*? As for *Annals of Blood*, would you like to share your advice for its future development?

Expert's brief introduction

Dr. Paul Ness is a Professor of pathology, medicine and oncology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and an editor of *Transfusion*. Dr. Ness earned his M.D. from State University of New York at Buffalo. His area of clinical expertise includes transfusion support of hematology and oncology patients and autoimmune hematologic disorders. Dr. Ness serves as the director of the Division of Transfusion Medicine and program director of the Blood Banking/Transfusion Medicine Fellowship Program in the Department of Pathology. Dr. Ness has an extensive background in clinical transfusion medicine and research activities related to blood safety and he has extensive experience in blood safety education programs internationally.

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1. Lian H, Zhong J. Interview with Prof. Paul Ness: to ask more, think more, make more friends and never stop learning. *Asvide* 2017;4:354. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1668>

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