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Author: Yetmgeta E. Abdella

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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Response to the Letter to the Editor

Ahmad Gharehbaghian, DCLS-PhD

Dean of School of Allied Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran/& ISBT Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean

First I should thank the authors of the letter for their due consideration to the article and aspects that could be rectified or improved. I am grateful to them and demonstrates that they care about the status of transfusion in this region.

As mentioned on page 449 of the article in the Material and Methods section, the article was the outcome of data collected via internet surfing and article review from different countries in WHO-EMR region. Moreover, some data were also taken from a few experts in the regional countries and their viewpoints were asked for, to provide more certainty. I appreciated their efforts as detailed in the Acknowledgment section.

As shown, the data were not then taken from the World Health Organization (WHO) and it is acknowledged that it would have been better to consult with them. It would have certainly added rigor to the data.

On the other hand, I presented the data from this article at the 34th International of Congress of the ISBT (3-6 September 2016) in Dubai and I was privileged that both Dr. Abdella and Pro. Sibinga attended to my presentation time. I did not receive any impression there there was any misrepresentation of the status of blood services in WHO-EMR counties¹ after my speech. It was not published for a few months at the request of Prof Sibinga. Then I thought it might be worth publishing as the article was just the reflection of internet and article surfing. It is evident that the newest valid WHO-EMR report might best display WHO-EMR status. What I did was an effort to bring together the scattered information here and there and to do my best to share what was accessible. I also analyzed the collected data in the Discussion section and made some recommendations and suggested efforts that can be made by blood transfusion establishments in WHO-EMR region for improvement of blood transfusion activities in the Conclusion section. It is worth mentioning that I have a long experience of working for the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) at different positions the last of which being a 9-year-long deputyship for research and education, as well as being the head of IBTO Research Center for 8 years and being the author of a good number of books and articles.

The valuable WHO-EMR report published after my article is the best comprehensive report, though without analysis and evaluation. I am sure efforts in this regard will be made and important articles will be published. However, there is a sentence in this report: "While great effort has been undertaken to obtain data from countries, the data submitted by national authorities have not been independently verified" onn page 20. Limitation ².

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