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Public Health (06-02-2014)

Patient Safety: New EU Rapid Alert platform for human Blood and Blood Components

A new platform launched by the European Commission will improve the safety of patients that undergo medical treatment involving blood and blood products.

From today, national health authorities can use the web-based Rapid Alert system for Blood and Blood Components (RAB) that allows them to exchange information so that cross-border incidents are prevented or contained and immediate measures can be taken to ensure the safety of patients. RAB will be used in parallel with existing national vigilance systems which collect and manage the alerts related to blood donated and used in the same Member State.

Due to the high volume of blood donated and transfused every year in the EU - more than 24 million units of blood and blood components were issued and over 2 million patients were transfused in 2011 alone - vigilance of all blood and its components transmitted across borders is of great importance. RAB supports this by allowing quick communication of the information needed for national authorities to take appropriate measures.

In addition to quality and safety defects of blood and blood components, the RAB can be used to raise the alarm on medical devices used for blood treatment and testing in this field, as well as on developing epidemiological situations (e.g. disease outbreaks) which may have cross-border implications on donation.

For more information on blood:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/blood_tissues_organ/blood/index_en.htm

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