

# Health app leads to quicker treatment for therapeutic blood donors

March 12 2015, by Hayley Mayne

---

A [web-based app](#) designed by Murdoch researchers in conjunction with the Australian Red Cross Blood Service is changing the lives of thousands of patients suffering from iron disorders.

The [app](#) allows GPs to quickly determine if their patients would benefit from giving a therapeutic blood donation or venesection and also rules out those patients who wouldn't, saving thousands from giving unnecessary donations each year.

Professor John Olynyk from Murdoch University is a leading international expert in hereditary haemochromatosis, a common genetic disorder in which the body absorbs too much iron from the diet.

Without regular blood donations, around 12,000 hemochromatosis sufferers in Australia would end up with too much iron in their blood leading to organ damage.

Professor Olynyk designed the complex algorithms behind the High Ferritin app that has decreased waiting times for patients with iron disorders to gain treatment.

"Rather than filling out paperwork and waiting days for a reply, GPs now go online and enter the patient's medical results into the app and find out in real time if their patient should be referred to the Red Cross," Professor Olynyk said.

The referral process is based on nationally endorsed, evidence-based algorithms which have markedly reduced the number of unnecessary therapeutic venesections.

"It is estimated that 4000 unnecessary venesections are averted per year, equating to \$1.4 million in avoided cost," Professor Olynyk said.

Dr Peter Bentley, Medical Services Manager WA for the Australian Red Cross Blood Service said that from the Blood Service perspective there have been significant cost savings and efficiency gains since the app was introduced in 2013.

"Accepted referrals now comply with current evidence-based practice and the donor is contacted by the Blood Service within 48 hours of referral, a 97 per cent improvement, and generally attends an appointment within 19 days," Dr Bentley said.

"Another benefit of the app is that there is now no variation regarding referral quality and there is no variation in referral management and response times between states."

The app was recently recognised as a finalist in the recent OzApp Awards which judges the Asia Pacific's region's best mobile, web and cloud based apps. As well as being named as one of the top 20 finalists the app took out the \$5,000 Curtin Make Tomorrow Better prize, which is awarded to a startup that fulfills a social good aspect in the community.

"We'll be using the prize money to develop the app and improve the interface for the GP's making it more automated," Professor Olynyk said.

Provided by Murdoch University

Citation: Health app leads to quicker treatment for therapeutic blood donors (2015, March 12)  
retrieved 8 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-03-health-app-quicker-treatment-therapeutic.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.