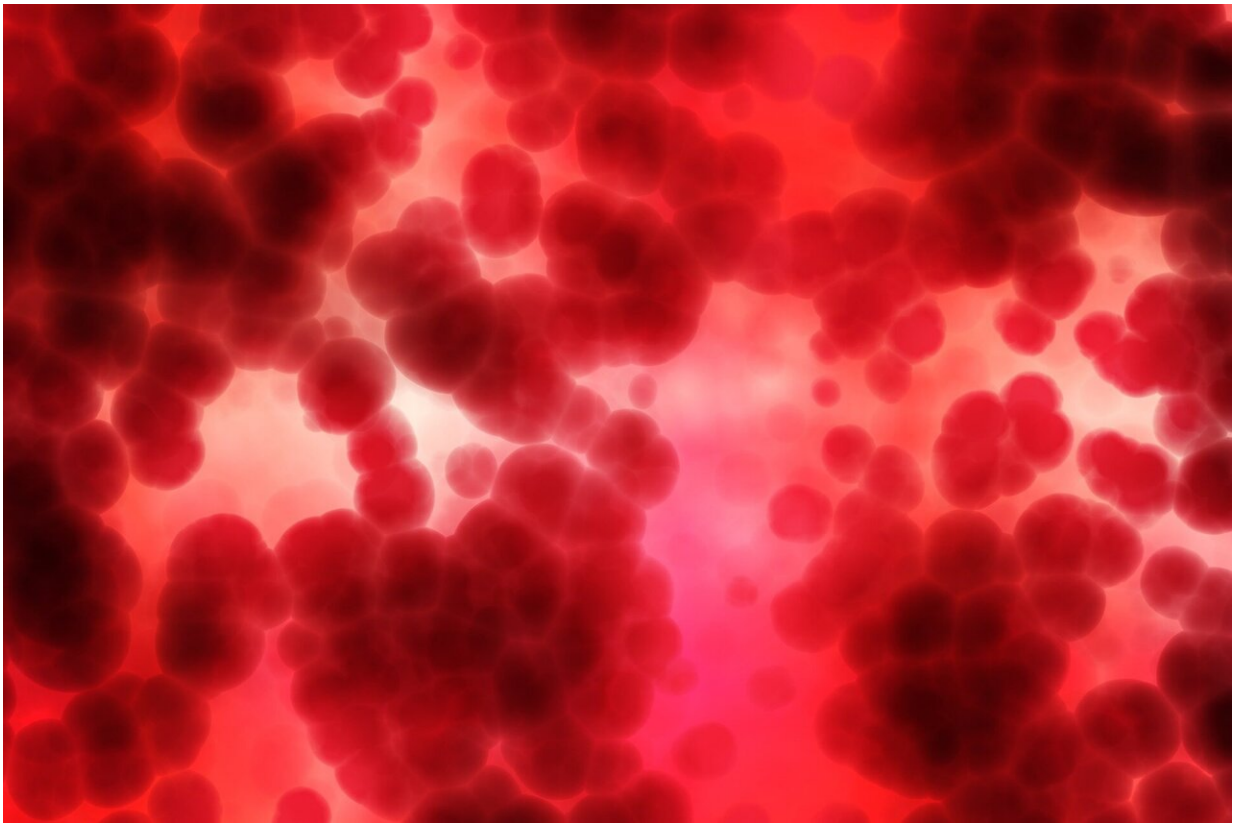


# Research finds COVID plasma donation is fuelled by kindness

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Researchers have given new insights into why people would choose to donate COVID-19 plasma after recovering from the virus, which will be used to support the recruitment of convalescent plasma donors to help

treat current COVID-19 patients and support ongoing trials.

Researchers from the University of Nottingham's School of Psychology, in collaboration with Australian Red Cross Lifeblood and the University of Queensland Australia have been the first in the world to examine the motivations and barriers to convalescent plasma donation in the UK. The findings published in *Transfusion Medicine*, showed that most people would choose to donate as they want to show their gratitude by giving something back after recovering.

Convalescent plasma is a treatment being trialed for COVID-19 and involves [blood plasma](#) from recovered COVID-19 patients being transfused into patients who are currently in hospital with the virus. This provides 'passive' immunity as the antibodies against COVID-19 are transferred from the recovered patient to the current patient to support their immune system to fight the virus.

Professor Eamonn Ferguson from the University of Nottingham's School of Psychology was one of the lead authors on the study, he said: "The use of convalescent plasma as a treatment relies on the generosity and 'altruism' of those who have recently recovered from the virus to help those currently ill. To enhance the recruitment of convalescent plasma donors—much as blood donors in general—we need to understand what would motivate, or even defer, those who are eligible to be convalescent plasma donors to donate."

The study involved 419 UK residents who indicated they had been infected with COVID-19 and were eligible to donate convalescent plasma. They were asked about their awareness of convalescent plasma, motivations, and barriers to donating.

The researchers identified six key motivations—Altruism from adversity, post-traumatic growth, moral and civic duty to help research,

patriotism and control, reluctant altruism, and signaling reluctant altruism. They found the main motivation to donate from these was altruism from adversity—people being grateful to have survived with a sense of pay-it-back and pay-it-forwards reciprocity, and moral and civic duty- the morally right thing to do to help family, friends and support research.

Barriers to donating were also explored—not well enough, logistics, generic donation fears, lack of trust in institutions, fear of re-infection, infection and process risk to self and others and worry that others will know of COVID-19 infection. Of these, generic fears were the biggest barrier with a fear of needles being a particular deterrent.

Professor Ferguson continues: "These results highlight the extreme kindness, generosity, and cooperative spirit of human nature. Even under the adverse condition of a global pandemic, people are willing to help strangers and those who are in need which is borne out of adversity but also a [moral sense](#) of what is right. This is a real good news study about the human condition and how we are all there for each other. Indeed, little put people off donating convalescent plasma other than a general fear of needles.

The results also suggest several ways that transfusion services to develop recruitment campaigns to attract more convalescent plasma donors. These could focus on simple gratitude interventions, ideas of pay-it-back reciprocity, and moral imperatives.

We feel these new and novel findings have the potential to help in the fight against COVID-19 by providing evidence about ways to support the recruitment of convalescent plasma donors that are urgently needed to support ongoing research trials and treatment of patients."

Dr. Rachel Thorpe from Australian Red Cross Lifeblood said: "It's

incredibly useful for transfusion services to understand that people are willing to donate plasma for research even during a pandemic, and that this willingness could be enhanced through increasing public awareness about convalescent plasma and about what is involved in donating [plasma](#)."

**More information:** Barbara M. Masser et al, Motivators of and barriers to becoming a COVID -19 convalescent plasma donor: A survey study, *Transfusion Medicine* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/tme.12753](https://doi.org/10.1111/tme.12753)

Provided by University of Nottingham

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