HEMATOLOGY

Can Give Blood Plasma Weekly With Cell Return

➤ A WAY by which a person can safely give blood plasma almost every week, or as often as 50 times a year, was announced by Drs. Joseph Smolens and Joseph Stokes Jr. of Philadelphia at the meeting in Boston of the International Society of Blood Transfusion and the American Association of Blood Banks.

The method is called plasmapheresis. Its importance lies in the fact that through it large quantities of plasma safe from the virus of hepatitis, or jaundice, and from bacteria can be accumulated and stockpiled for use in case of mass disasters and war.

A pint of blood is taken from the donor at each weekly bleeding. A little less than half a pint, 200 cubic centimeters, of plasma is kept. The red blood cells from the pint of blood are immediately returned to the donor.

This is done by use of the ADL Cohn Blood Fractionator, which does a continuous job of separating the red cells from the plasma with immediate return of the red cells to the donor.

Transfusions of plasma, useful for fighting shock, have been stopped since discovery some years ago that the virus causing hepatitis, or jaundice, was being transmitted by pooled plasma.

By carefully selecting the donor, to make as sure as possible that his blood does not contain the hepatitis virus, and by keeping each plasma donation in its own easily stacked, non-breakable and non-porous plastic bag in which it is collected, the virus danger can to some extent be prevented.

For further safety, the plasma in its plastic bag can be left at any desired temperature to inactivate the virus. Aging of the plasma through storage should also cut down the hepatitis danger to well below that of whole blood.

Plasmapheresis, the Philadelphia doctors reported, has been carried out successfully 25 times on each of 23 donors in a period of one year. They say it could be done as often as 50 times a year. Three plasmapheresis donations can be obtained in one hour, making the method practicable.

Extensive tests have shown its safety.

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