Detection of Rhesus Antigens and Rh Phenotype in Donors at National Blood Transfusion Center, Khartoum, Sudan
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DOI: 10.36347/sajp.2020.v09i03.004 | Received: 17.03.2020 | Accepted: 24.03.2020 | Published: 30.03.2020

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**Abstract**

The Rhesus (Rh) blood group system is one of the most polymorphic and immunogenic systems known in humans, because of its immunogenicity along with ABO grouping. This is a cross-sectional study was conducted at national blood transfusion center at Khartoum State to determine the frequency of various Rhesus antigens among Sudanese blood donors in order to minimize Rhesus allo-immunization among Blood recipients. It included 200 donors males from different tribes. The blood were collected from volunteers. ABO grouping was performed by slide method and Rhesus grouping was done by tube method using commercially available standard antisera tested (anti-D, anti-C, anti-c, anti-E, and anti-e). Among the participants (86%) of donors are Rh D positive and (14%) Rh D negative. The percentage of Rh Antigens were e (79.5%), c (68.5%), C (27%), and E (18.5%) respectively. The study shows that the frequencies of the Rhesus antigens were similar to studies in other countries.

**Keywords:** ABO blood grouping, Rhesus D, Donors, Rh Antigens.

**INTRODUCTION**

The ABO system antigens and Rhesus (Rh) system antigens are beneficial in genetic studies. Resolving some clinical problems, useful in compatibility testing at blood banking, there are different blood group systems antigens, the ABO blood group antigens are e most clinically important in blood transfusion centers. The information about distribution of ABO and Rh blood antigens is very important in management of blood bank transfusion centers and to facilitate the transfusion services [1]. The Rh blood group system includes approximately more than 50 antigens on the red cell surface. The most significant antigen in the Rh system is D antigen, because it is most likely to produce an immune system response [2].

The Rh blood group is important blood group after ABO in the blood transfusion services, and the D antigen is important antigen among Rh antigens in blood banking [2, 3]. The D antibody is produced in patient after stimulation or transfusion with D-positive red blood cells [4]. The ABO blood group and D status of blood donors and recipients are always taken into account when RBCs are transfused [5].

Rhesus (Rh) blood group system is the second most important system in blood transfusion after the ABO system. This system was discovered by Landsteiner and Wiener after experiencing problems in transfusion, as even when the ABO groups were matching they still had problems, including hemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn [6, 7]. The Rh blood group system, unlike the ABO system, has been shown to have 6 common antigens listed as C, c, D, d, E, and e as originally suggested by Fisher after Landsteiner [6, 8]. There are racial differences in the distribution of these antigens. Rhesus D negative is more common in Africans but is uncommon in Caucasians with a prevalence of approximately <2% [9].

All human populations share the same ABO and Rhesus blood group systems; although they differ in the frequencies and distributions of specific types in different races, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic groups or amongst different populations [10, 11].
METHODS

This is a cross-sectional study was conducted in national blood transfusion center at Khartoum state between January to December 2015. It Included 200 donors males from different Tribes.

Ethical approval for study was obtained by the Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Health, Sudan. Consent forms were used to inform participants about the purposes and objectives of the study.

The blood was collected from volunteers. ABO grouping was performed by slide method and Rhesus grouping was done by tube method using commercially available standard antisera tested (anti-D, anti-C, anti-c, anti-E, and anti-e). The tubes were labeled according to Rh antisera type for each donor. One drop of typing sera was added to tube according to Rh sera labeling, one drop of the 5% donor cells suspension was added to each tube and centrifuged for 15 seconds and agglutination reaction was observed.

The information required was taken from the donors’ information sheet inclusion criteria of the study were; all donors were male from 18 to 58 years and not donated before six months, negative to blood transmitted diseases. The data were collected, organized, and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Packages of Social Sciences) 16.

RESULTS

A total of 200 donors included in this study all of them were males. Distribution of ABO blood group antigens were O (58.5%), A (22.5%), B (15.0%), and AB (4.0%) Table 1. The percentage and Rh D antigen are 86% (172) positive and 14% (28) were negative as shown Table 2 the percentage of the Rh antigens was D (86%), e (86.5%), c (79%), C (21%), and E (26.5%) respectively in Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Distribution of ABO blood group among study population</th>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<th>Table 2: Distribution of Rh-D in the study population</th>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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Fig.1: Distribution of frequency percentage of Rh phenotyping

DISCUSSION

The distribution of ABO and Rh blood groups is important for effective management of blood banks. It is mandatory to have information on the distribution of these blood groups in any population [11].

Rh antigens are highly immunogenic and till now, 49 Rh antigens are identified. D antigen is most significant and D- negative individuals produce anti-D antibodies if they encounter the D antigen through transfusion or pregnancy and causes hemolytic transfusion reaction or hemolytic disease of fetus and newborn. For this reason, the Rh status is routinely determined in blood donors, transfusion recipients, and in pregnancy [12].

The Rh blood group system includes many immunogenic antigens that are located on variant forms of RhD and RhCE proteins. The genes responsible for the Rh proteins are located on the short arm of chromosome number one [13-15].
This study was performed to detect the frequencies of the various Rh antigens among the blood donors in National Blood Transfusion Center – Khartoum.

Among participants ABO grouping distribution showed O (58.5%), A (22.5%), B (15.0%) and AB (4.0%) Table 1. However the majority of ABO blood group for Sudanese people was found to be group O (58.5%) which similar to results reported in other studies [1, 16, 17]. In other research conducted in India reported the group B was highest frequency [18]. This may be because the sample in our study is small or our population genetic is different from India.

Our results showed the most frequent Rh antigen is e (86.5%), D (86%), c (79%), E (26.5%) and C (21%) respectively (figure 2). The frequencies were consistent to result obtained in studies carried in Mainland Chinese and study in Uganda by and contrast to study in Malaysia [19-21].

Our research found e antigen is higher frequencies (86.5), while the C antigens were lower Frequencies 21%. This was similar to finding in Asian population and whites European [22, 23]. In contrast to other studies reported the E antigen was major frequencies [24].

Our results indicate that the distributions of RBC antigens differ in different ethnic groups, which may be the result of different genetic and geographical origins.

The percentage of D antigen is 86 % among the donors which contradictory to finding in other studies in Saudi Arabia [25]. Furthermore, a study that conducted on southwestern Uganda by Mbalibulha found the 96 % of participants expressed D antigen [20].

The Rh D negative frequency in this study is 14.2%. These results contrast with the study of the frequency to Rh-negative group in the Saudi population and Pakistan is 7 % [26,27],while in Nigeria 4.8% of blood donors were found to be Rh-negative [28] and in Nepal and Guinea, 3.3% and 4.1% were Rh-negative respectively [29, 30]. The differences may be due to ethnic factors and our study demonstrate only male donors because female in our country is rarely donated blood because male is more healthier and fit than female and the female more susceptible to anemia during menstruating age in addition to pregnancy and breastfeeding inhibit them from donation.

The determination of Rhesus antigens is important to prevent hemolytic disease for new born which occur when a Rhesus negative mother pregnant with Rhesus positive fetus and prevent alloimmunization when Rhesus negative patient transfused with Rhesus positive blood.

CONCLUSION
This study conclude that the percentages of the ABO blood groups were O (58.5%), A (22.5%), B (15.0%), and AB (4%). Whereas the frequency percentage and Rh D negative donors were 14%. Furthermore the frequency percentages of other various Rh antigens were e (86.5%), c (79%), C (21%), and E (26.5%).

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