

Perioperative blood transfusions: Indications and options.

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Abstract:

A reevaluation of the indications for and alternatives to transfusion of allogeneic blood was precipitated by transfusion-induced HIV. The transfusion trigger has shifted from an optimal hemoglobin level and hematocrit (10/30) to that level of hemoglobin necessary to meet the patient's tissue oxygen demands. This critical level can best be determined by physiologic measurements. A number of autologous blood options can reduce the patient's allogeneic blood needs. Pharmacologic measures to increase hemoglobin levels (erythropoietin) and to decrease blood loss at surgery are discussed as are the potential contributions of blood substitutes to transfusion support of the surgical patient.