

## FILARIASIS AMONG ASYMPTOMATIC BLOOD DONORS IN GENERAL HOSPITAL, ODAN MARINA-LAGOS, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

It has been stated that high prevalence of blood transmissible infections in Africa has compounded the problem of blood shortage in the blood banks as many donors who were positive for any of these infection are automatically excluded from donation. This fact, together with changing population demographics, increased travels with respect to rural urban migration and the problems of commercial donors has made it necessary to determine the prevalence of filarial infection among donors in our health institutions. In this study 300 healthy donors (255 males and 45 females) M: F ratio 8.5:1.5 ratio, age range 18- 50 years were screened, subjects aged 18 years and above and voluntarily consenting to donate blood at the blood bank at General Hospital Marina Lagos between March and July 2010 were screened for Filarial infection. Five milliliters of blood was collected from each subject. The modified thick smear technique stained with Giemsa and Haema to xylins stains were used and examined microscopically. 1(0.33%) was positive for *Wuchereria bancrofti*, 1(0.33%) had *Mansonella perstans*, while 4(1.33%) had *Loa loa*. All the donors were male aged 22, 23, 25, 30, 31 and 44 years and were asymptomatic. The average parasite density in the donors was 1.4/20  $\mu$ L of blood. Because off the possibility off allergic reactions from transfused microfilariae, routine screening for microfilariae should be incorporated into transfusion policy. However, view the generally low apathy to voluntary donation in Nigeria, it may not be justified to exclude potential donor positive for filariasis. Instituting prompt antifilarial treatment for patients receiving such blood may be a credible alternative. The study confirms that blood transfusion will always represent a risk though, small to the recipient. Careful and critical examination of donors to improve quality donor selection and transfusion is essential.

**KEYWORDS:** Prevalence, Microfilaria, Asymptomatic, Blood Donor, Lagos