



# The Jehovah's Witness in Cardiac Surgery

# Witnesses Are...

- NOT anti-medicine
- NOT martyrs
- NOT practicing “faith-healing”
- NOT advocating a right to die

# Witnesses Do...

- Love Life
- Seek out quality health care
- Accept the vast majority of medical treatments

So, What's the problem?



# Jehovah's Witnesses Believe...

- Blood Transfusion is prohibited by Biblical passages such as:

"Only flesh with its soul-its blood-you must not eat." (Genesis 9:3,4)

"No soul of YOU must eat blood and no alien resident who is residing as an alien in YOUR midst should eat blood." (Leviticus 17:12)

"It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and our decision to lay no further burden upon you beyond these essentials, You are to abstain from blood, from anything that has been strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these things you are doing right" (Acts 15:19,20 NEB) Council of Jerusalem AD49

# Motive

- Have refused since transfusion of whole blood became common after WWII
  - Not because they are anti-medicine
  - Not simply because of the ever emerging risks associated with blood transfusions
  - Feel it involves their relationship with God

# History

- Initially many confrontations and a general adversarial relationship
  - Puerto Rico, after midnight on November of 1976; armed with a court order, five policemen and three nurses burst into the hospital room of 45-year -old Ana Paz de Rosario, strapped her to the bed, and forced a blood transfusion on her, She went into shock and died.
  - Italy, in 1982, a couple who had sought medical help in four countries for their incurably ill daughter were sentenced to 14 years in prison on the charge of murder after the girl died while being given a court-ordered transfusion.
  - Great public hostility has been whipped up by the press when children of Jehovah's Witnesses are involved. In some instances, even without a legal hearing at which the parents could speak, judges have ordered that their children be transfused. In more than 40 cases in Canada, the transfused children were returned to their parents dead.

# History

- Some exceptions
  - e.g. Dr. Denton Cooley, beginning in the 60's performed bloodless heart surgery on 663 Witnesses over 27 years
  - "We became so impressed with the results on the Jehovah's Witnesses that we started using the procedure on all our heart patients. We've had surprisingly good success and used it in our [heart] transplants as well." Interview Dec. 1970



# History

- "Since 1962 bloodless prime has been routinely utilized in more than 5,000 operations at this institution with excellent results; and several hundred of these operations were performed electively without blood transfusions in patients most of whom were not Jehovah's Witnesses. - *The American Journal of Cardiology* February 1972

John R. Zaorski, Grady L. Hallman and Denton A. Cooley,

# History

- "We believe that our experience demonstrates the feasibility of open heart surgery in Jehovah's Witnesses and, moreover, indicates that blood transfusion can and should be used sparingly to reduce morbidity and mortality in all patients." - *The American Journal of Cardiology* February 1972  
John R. Zaorski, Grady L. Hallman and Denton A. Cooley,

# History

- As more became known about the risks of blood transfusion during the 70's and 80's, many doctors begin looking for alternatives.

# Today

- "What started as religious belief is evolving into medical preference and advanced technology. Bloodless medicine and surgery, motivated in part by the doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses, is moving far beyond the needs of a spiritual society into operating rooms nationwide."

**AHA News** (American Hospital Association)

# Transfusion Requirements in critical care (TRICC)

- Restrictive strategy of red-cell transfusion is at least as effective as and possibly superior to a liberal transfusion strategy in critically ill patients, with the possible exception of patients with acute myocardial infarction and unstable angina

Hébert, *NEJM*. 1999; 340:409

# Liver transplant possible without transfusion?

- "The associated coagulopathy, anemia, malnutrition, and severe portal hypertension have made this procedure more daunting and the use of blood products almost universal,"
- "Using conventional surgical standards, it would be a clinical improbability to perform liver transplantation with success in Jehovah's Witness patients."

SOURCE: Journal of the American College of Surgeons, September 5, 2005. Authored by Dr. Nicolas Jabbour & colleagues.)

# Liver transplant possible without transfusion

NEW YORK (Reuters Health Sept. 22, 2005) - Surgeons in California have succeeded in routinely transplanting livers without using blood transfusions in the recipients. "If we can do liver transplantation, which is one of the most difficult surgeries in the abdomen to do without blood transfusion, then we can pretty much do almost any surgery in the abdomen without blood transfusions," Dr. Singh Gagandeep

# Liver transplant possible without transfusion

- "We should look at blood conservation not as an art but as a science," he added. "No matter how safe we make blood donation, there will always be the risk of disease transmission."
- In 10 to 15 years from now, he predicted, "we hopefully will not have to use blood products at all, substituting synthetic products instead."

Dr. Singh Gagandeep

SOURCE: Journal of the American College of Surgeons, September 5, 2005.



# What Experienced Professionals Say



*"Bloodless surgery is not only for Jehovah's Witnesses but for all patients. I think every doctor should be engaged in it."*

Dr Joachim Boldt - Prof. Of Anaesthesiology  
Ludwigshafen, Germany.

*"Members of my dept said, 'These patients who are not getting blood are doing just as well and maybe even better. If this is the best care we should apply it to everybody', so now we are looking for bloodless medicine to become the standard of care."*

Dr Aryeh Shander - Asst Clinical Prof. of Anaesthesiology, USA



*"It just so happens that bloodless surgery is particularly relevant to Jehovah's Witnesses. However, this is how we want to treat everybody."*

Mr Peter Earnshaw FRCS - Consultant Orthopaedic  
Surgeon, Guy's Hospital, London

# World-wide

- 110,000 physicians have shown a willingness to treat Jehovah's Witnesses without blood.
- More than 100 hospitals have blood management programs (70 in U.S.)
- New procedures & pharmaceuticals being developed to conserve & even eliminate the need for blood products.
  - Where do Jehovah's Witnesses draw the line?

# Basic Stand on Blood

WHOLE BLOOD

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graph TD; WB[WHOLE BLOOD] --> RC[Red Cells]; WB --> WC[White Cells]; WB --> P[Plasma]; WB --> PL[Platelets]; RC --> FRC[Fractions From Red Cells]; WC --> FWC[Fractions From White Cells]; P --> FPL[Fractions From Plasma]; PL --> FPLT[Fractions From Platelets];
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Unacceptable

Red Cells

White Cells

Plasma

Platelets

Christian  
To Decide

Fractions  
From  
Red Cells

Fractions  
From  
White Cells

Fractions  
From  
Plasma

Fractions  
From  
Platelets

# Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care

**Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**  
(Washington Revised Code §§ 11.94.010 to 11.94.900)

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print or type full name), fill out this document to set forth my treatment instructions and to appoint a health-care agent in case of my incapacity.

2. I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I direct that **NO TRANSFUSIONS of whole blood, red cells, white cells, platelets, or plasma** be given me under any circumstances, even if health-care providers believe that such are necessary to preserve my life. I refuse to donate and store my blood for later infusion.

3. **Regarding minor fractions of blood:** [initial those that apply]  
 (a) \_\_\_\_\_ I REFUSE ALL    (b) \_\_\_\_\_ I REFUSE ALL EXCEPT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) \_\_\_\_\_ I may be willing to accept some minor blood fractions, but the details will have to be discussed with me if I am conscious or with my health care agent in case of my incapacity.

4. **Regarding medical procedures involving the use of my own blood,** except diagnostic procedures, such as blood samples for testing: [initial those that apply]  
 (a) \_\_\_\_\_ I REFUSE ALL    (b) \_\_\_\_\_ I REFUSE ALL EXCEPT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) \_\_\_\_\_ I may be willing to accept certain medical procedures involving my blood, but the details will have to be discussed with me if I am conscious or with my health-care agent in case of my incapacity.

5. **Regarding end-of-life matters:** [initial one of the two choices]  
 (a) \_\_\_\_\_ I do not want my life to be prolonged if, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, my situation is hopeless.  
 (b) \_\_\_\_\_ I want my life to be prolonged as long as possible within the limits of generally accepted medical standards, even if this means that I might be kept alive on machines for years.

6. **Regarding other health-care instructions** (such as current medications, allergies, and medical problems):  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. I give no one (including my agent) any authority to disregard or override my instructions set forth herein. Family members, relatives, or friends may disagree with me, but any such disagreement does not diminish the strength or substance of my refusal of blood or other instructions.

8. Apart from the matters covered above, I appoint the person named below as my agent to make health-care decisions for me. I give my agent full power and authority to consent to or to refuse treatment

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(including artificial nutrition and hydration) on my behalf, to consult with my doctors and receive copies of my medical records, and to take legal action to ensure that my wishes are honored. If my first appointed agent is unavailable, unable, or unwilling to serve, I appoint an alternate agent below to serve with the same power and authority.

9. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_

10. **STATEMENT OF WITNESSES:** The person who signed this document above did so in my presence and is personally known to me. He or she appears to be of sound mind and free from duress, fraud, or undue influence. I am 18 years of age or older.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of witness \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of witness \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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**HEALTH-CARE AGENT\***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_


**ALTERNATE HEALTH-CARE AGENT\***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\* Note: You may appoint any adult to be your agent. However, your agent may not be your physician or his or her employee or the owner, administrator, or employee of the health-care facility or long-term care facility where you reside or receive care unless he or she is your spouse, adult child, or brother or sister.

**Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**  
(signed document inside)

**NO BLOOD**



dpa-E Uwa 11/04

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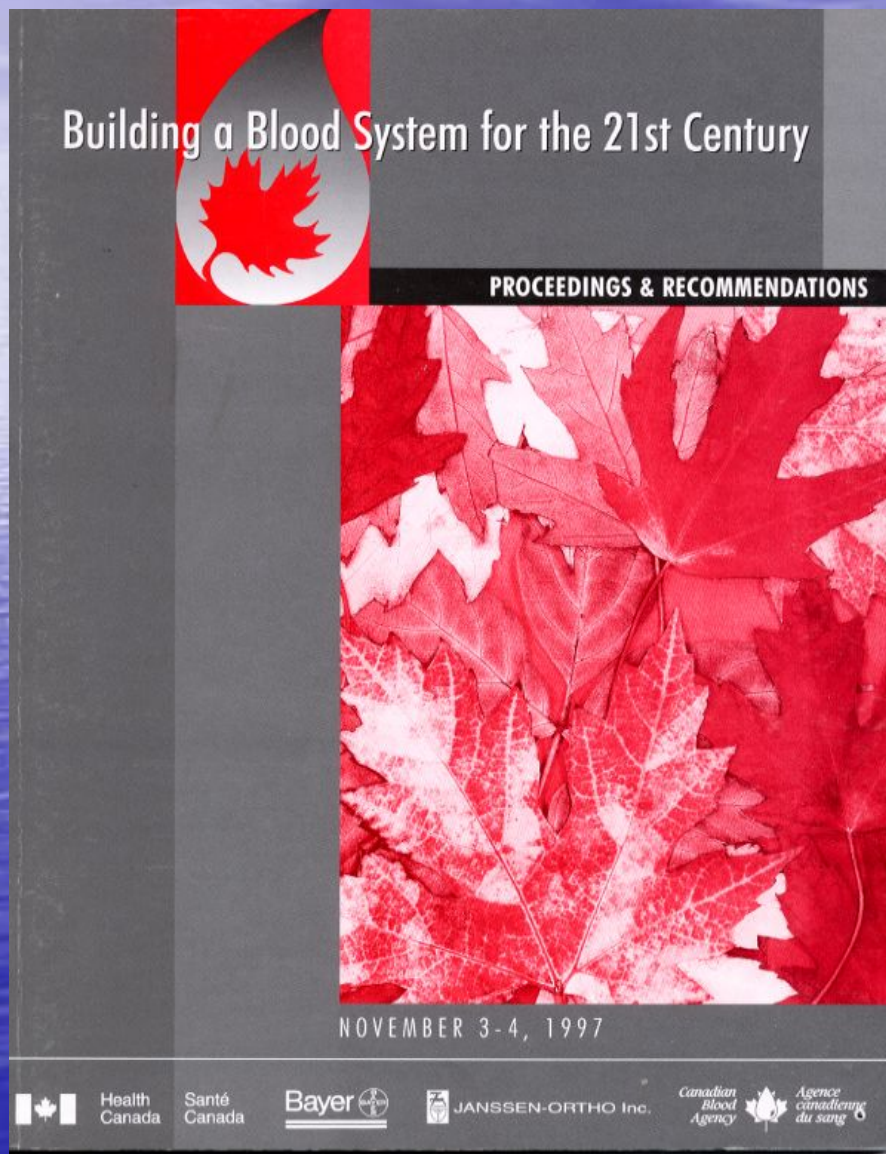
# Resources to Assist You

- **Hospital Liaison Committee (HLC)**
  - 1,600 committees with over 9,000 volunteers world-wide
- **Hospital Information Services (HIS)**  
**(718) 560-4300**

# What Can The Hospital Liaison Committee Provide?

- Explanation of Jehovah's Witnesses position on the medical use of blood – (Individual or Departmental presentations).
- Development of Local Protocols.
- Provision of Witness specific Consent Forms.
- Confidential listing of cooperative Consultants for advice and referral.
- A resource available to both patient and clinician when there seems to be a potential crisis. (24/7)
- Oversight of Patient Support Groups whose function is to offer comprehensive pastoral care to patients and visiting relatives.
- Global database on "Bloodless" techniques successfully used with patients who are Jehovah's Witnesses.

# Canada Rebuilds the National Blood System



The Introduction states that his document is the result of “the first ever multi-disciplinary conference of its kind in Canada, perhaps in the world. It brought together in a problem-solving format the key stakeholders in Canada’s blood supply system: medical professionals, healthcare administrators, public health officers, consumers, funders, regulators and industry.”

The 31 page Appendix entitled “Medical Alternatives to Blood Transfusion” was compiled by Hospital Information Services for Jehovah’s Witnesses.

# Resources to Assist

**This 28-minute program received the recognition when audiovisual producers from around the world gathered on Friday, June 8, 2001, for the 34th annual U.S. International Film and Video Festival awards presentations. Winning productions from 33 nations were honored at the Marriott Downtown Hotel in Chicago.**

**Transfusion-Alternative Strategies took the Gold Camera award in the category of Medicine, Health: Current Issues.**

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Joan-François Baron, Paris, France  
Peter H Earnshaw, London, UK  
Lawrence T. Goodnough, St Louis, Missouri, U S.A.  
Todd K. Rosengart, Chicago, Illinois, US A.  
Johannes Scheele, Jena, Germany  
Donat R. Spahn, Zurich, Switzerland  
Richard K Spence, Birmingham, Alabama, U.S.A.  
Linda Stehling, Scottsdale, Arizona, U S ,A,  
Philippe Van der Linden, Charleroi, Belgium

Award-Winning Video

## TRANSFUSION ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

*Simple ■ Safe ■ Effective*



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Philippe Van der Linden, Charleroi, Belgium



# Resources to Assist You



Physicians around the world are now successfully treating patients who desire to have medical care without blood transfusions. With the help of many recognized experts, this three-video series explores the medical, legal and ethical principles surrounding transfusion alternatives.

English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish

# Other ways we try to help

- In areas where equipment useful in minimizing blood loss is not available, Jehovah's Witnesses have donated machines such as the cell salvage shown here.



From the left – Jehovah's Witnesses John Marks, Alan Dunlop and John O'Mahony with Pilgrim Hospital's Dr David Boldy, Paul Haigh and Christine Holiday. NJ

**Awake!**

Average Printing 20,381,000  
Published in 82 Languages

## Nurses—What Would We Do Without Them?

**3-11**

Although often taken for granted, nurses are a vital part of health care. What are the joys and the challenges of this noble profession?

## Nurses Why Do We Need Them?

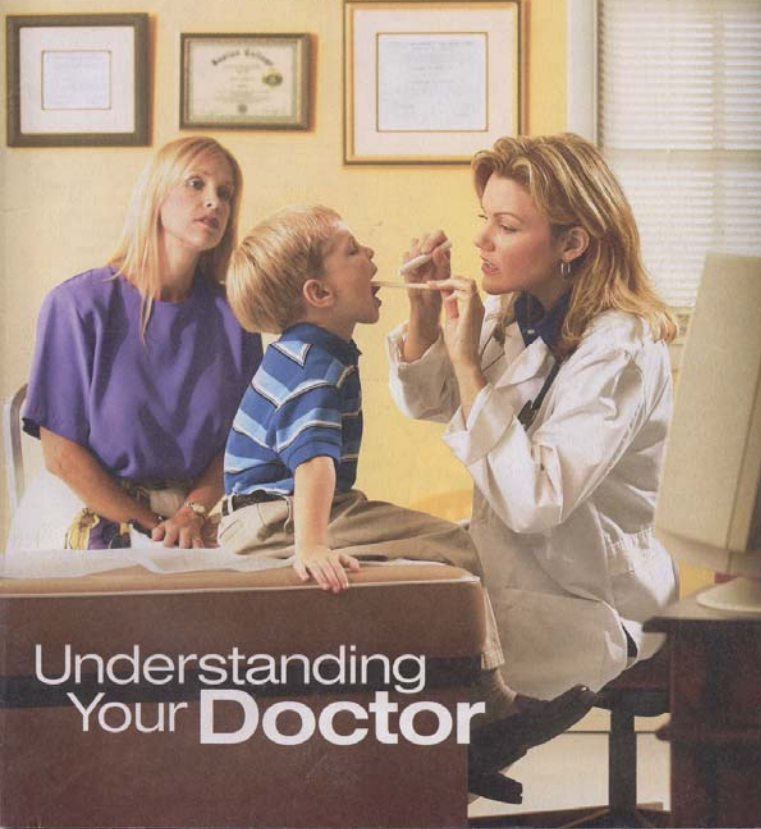
"Nursing is one of the most difficult of arts. Compassion may provide the motive, but knowledge is our only working power."  
—Mary Adelaide Nutting, 1925, world's first professor of nursing.

## The Vital Role of Nurses

"A nurse is a person who nourishes, fosters, and protects—a person who is prepared to care for the sick, injured, and aged." —*Nursing in Today's World—Challenges, Issues, and Trends.*

# Awake!

JANUARY 22, 2005

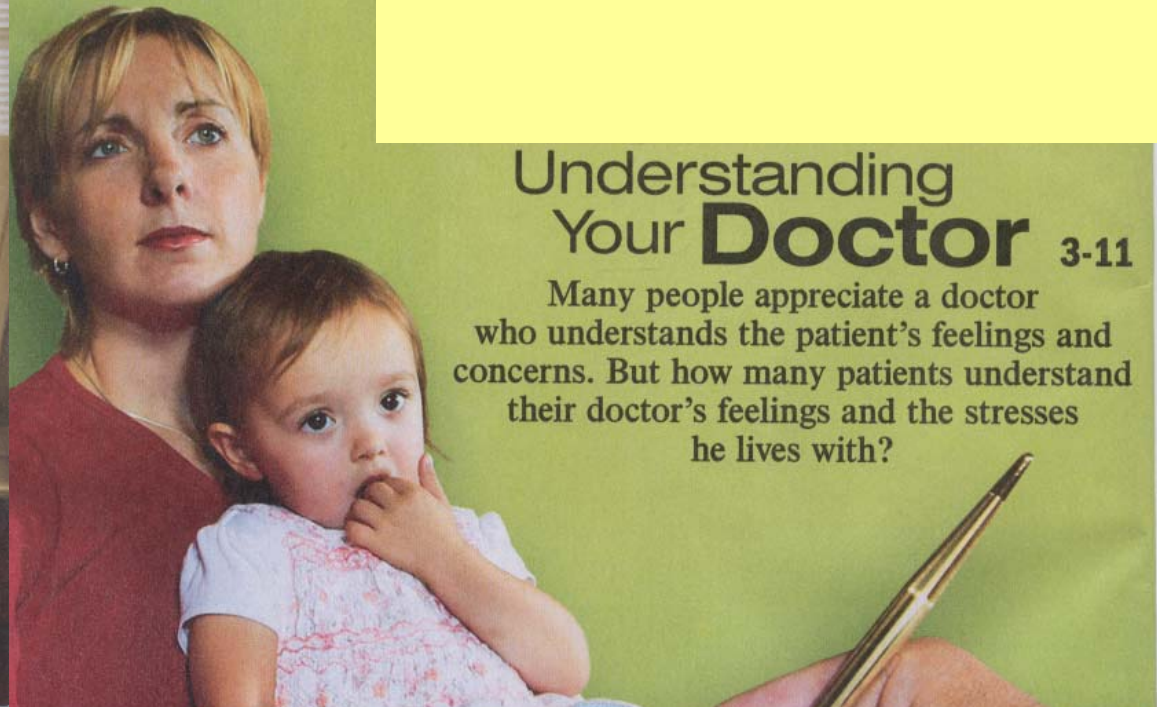


Understanding  
Your **Doctor**

## Encouraging Cooperation

### Understanding Your **Doctor** 3-11

Many people appreciate a doctor who understands the patient's feelings and concerns. But how many patients understand their doctor's feelings and the stresses he lives with?



Cooperation not confrontation!

