



HEADLINES England's new FA center well equipped to

[News](#) [Healthcare](#) [Nutrition & Environment](#) [Medicine & Therapy](#) [Research](#) [Industry](#) [World](#) [International Observance](#)[Home](#) [Perspectives](#) [Fitness Strategies](#) [Grandmother's Remedies](#) [Petcare](#) [Interviews](#) [Book Reviews](#) [Editor's word](#) [Blogs](#) [Inspirational Stories](#)

Excerpts of the interview published in June 2012

Alliance Transfusion - Transforming Transfusion Medicine

FH: Alliance Transfusion Pvt. Ltd. was recently founded in 2010. Tell us something about the story behind your initiative, your range of products and services in the healthcare domain? How unique and different is your organization in the industry?

AT: Transfusion Medicine is one of the youngest branches of Medicine. It is still evolving and, in India, it has a long way to go before this field can match the standards of say a Cardiac Medicine. Our venture was formed by a group of people specializing in different fields relevant to this sector. Dr Gautam Wankhede has more than 10 years of experience in Transfusion Medicine, while other colleagues (Kartik Jain, Srikant Patole, Nupur Bhatnagar) have considerable experience in sales, logistics and service in the diagnostic industry related to Blood Banking. We believe that we have the ability to understand Transfusion Medicine and Blood Banking; find gaps and provide the most appropriate solution. Our organization is one of the very few such venture which has a focus on Transfusion Medicine backed by a strong understanding and experience (clinical and commercial) of this field.

FH: What is the transfusion medicine scenario in India? How different is it from the developed parts of the world?

AT: In India, Transfusion Medicine is still at a nascent stage. The focus has traditionally been on what happens inside a Blood Bank, but, with the advent of this speciality, donor motivation and recruitment and what happens to the blood, once it leaves the blood bank, and care of the recipient is also coming in the ambit of the Blood Banker. Perhaps, the biggest difference from the developed world is the centralized system in the developed world versus the scattered system of blood banking in India. For example, in the UK, there are 100s of blood collection and donor recruitment centres, but the testing/processing is restricted to just a handful of centres spread across the country. This ensure that the testing/processing is standardized and automated, unlike many small blood banks in India, which carry the entire responsibility of collection, testing, processing and storing the blood.

FH: What are the challenges your organization faces in this business? How do you intend to address them?

AT: Alliance Transfusion believes in introducing state of the art solutions and technologies to the Blood Banks in India. Being a new concept or a new technology, the acceptance period is a little longer. For example, we have recently introduced TimeStrip® Time and Temperature monitoring devices to be used on Blood Bags. This is a British product, already in use in Blood Banks in Europe, but it will be some time before we see its full potential being exploited in India.

Another challenge that Blood Bankers face in India, which circuitously affect organizations such as ours, is the strict regulation over pricing. If a new drug or a prosthesis is introduced, the physician or the surgeon can use it (with the patient's consent), but any new test/procedure in a Blood Bank is difficult to implement as the price is regulated and fixed by Government authorities.

The Accreditation of Blood Banks by NABH is changing this scenario though and more emphasis is being given on quality.

Correspondingly, the time required for the regulatory approval of a new product acts as a big obstacle in introducing new technologies. India has a very robust and well laid out regulatory approval process, but we can do with a faster system as well.

FH: Which areas do you think are of immediate concerns to the healthcare fraternity, in the areas of transfusion medicine and biological therapies?

AT: India has a deficit of blood supply in the range of 20% to 40%. In most districts, blood banks do not have enough buffer stocks, vital for disaster management. In fact, in quite a few places, the blood supply is not adequate even for normal conditions. The next vital concern is the quality of donors. Voluntary blood donation figures are nowhere close to what they are in the developed world. Many donors still donate blood in lieu of money or other benefits and it is difficult for the blood banks to identify such donors. Infection rates are relatively high in such donors and this adds to the problem of blood supply. Last, but not the least is the matter of appropriate clinical use of blood and its components. Many clinicians remain unaware about the importance of avoiding whole blood transfusion, or how to store and transfuse blood components.

FH: Medical Ethics- is a lot spoken about, but sparsely followed. Many a times, greed for money prevails over delivering good healthcare products. Under such rampant themes, how does your company tread in healthcare business?

AT: Alliance Transfusion was formed with the intention of taking Transfusion Medicine to the next level in India. The sole focus our venture remains the supply of quality products and services. We understand that quality comes at a price, but whenever we deal with our principals, we do reinforce the point that India is a developing country where the healthcare products have to be priced in such a way that good quality products remain in the reach of all patients.

FH: How do you think our country is shaping up, in terms of research and development, in the areas of immunohematology, transfusion medicine, cell based therapies and regenerative medicine?

AT: There are some very good centres such as SGPGI (Lucknow), PGI (Chandigarh), CMC (Vellore), IIT (Mumbai) to name a few that are doing great work in terms of research and development in transfusion medicine. Infectious disease serology, immunohaematology and aphaeresis research has received a big boost in the last 5-6 years with all the top manufacturers of the above diagnostics tests/equipments entering the Indian market. Similarly, with many cord blood banks opening up, regenerative medicine is one of the most talked about topic in India. Virtually all medical specialities are looking at regenerative medicine as the next big hope, and there are many research papers/ case studies coming out on this topic.

FH: What are your organization's future plans and goals in contributing towards enhancement of the current healthcare setup?

AT: Alliance Transfusion's endeavour is to deliver simple yet robust solutions to Blood Banks and Laboratories that help reduce complexity and enable flexible, agile, cost effective and safe service delivery. Alliance Transfusion takes immense pride in the calibre of its team that is enthusiastic, energetic and dedicated and bring with them years of experience and goodwill gained during past associations. We believe that our combination of ethical business practices, high quality products and scientific expertise will help Blood Banks in South Asia reach a standard at par with the best in the world.

FH: Any message would you like to give to the budding researchers and entrepreneurs in the healthcare domain?

AT: It is a very exciting time to be in the field of Transfusion Medicine. On the one hand we are trying to find ways to overcome the traditional problems and on the other hand, the latest and most sophisticated equipments/tests are available in India. The entire spectrum of field is open to research and improvement. Just as an example, a researcher can study the prevalence of Dengue in apparently healthy donors, a disease unheard of in the developed world, or the importance of Type and Screen against Coomb's crossmatch. The same rule applies to the entrepreneurs as there is a scope of providing both basic, cost effective solutions and expensive, high end products as well.