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Intercultural cord blood donation- Treviso project “Anche noi... nati per donare”

The “**Progetto Treviso - Anche noi... nati per donare**” is born in the context of the national communicative promotion of the cord blood donation called “Nati per donare” (“Born to give”) sponsored by the Italian Health Department. This first ongoing project has already reached 1000 libraries, family counsellings and hospitals in our country. The project is realized thanks to voluntaries, midwives cooperating with gynecologists and doctors working at the transfusion center, with the supervision of the scientific committee of Italian Federation ADOCES.

Midwives and members of the council table meet periodically in order to discuss the way things are going on and examine new proposals. A trainee midwife maintains the relationships between cord blood bank and the contact persons in hospitals and family counsellings.

The aim of the project is to get through to migrant women living in our country in order to make them aware of the donation opportunity. Our message to these women is about the importance of intercultural blood donation for helping their sick fellow countrymen in need of a life- saving transplant and for increasing the number of cord blood units presenting different genetic characteristics. The growing number of immigrants coming to our country determines an increase of request for stem cells transplants which is not counterbalanced by genetically matching cord blood units: our aim is that of providing people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds with the matching cord blood unit. In some foreign countries (like African countries or Asian countries) there is no donors register and there are no public cord blood banks. The greater easiness of cord blood donation compared with that of bone marrow donation may increase the number of available units. Moreover the transplant of cord stem cells doesn't require a complete compatibility and the cord blood units are immediately available. In addition to that there is also the possibility to collect the unit of cord blood for a sick member of the family, for example an elder brother; it is very important to inform immigrant women about this possibility. Considering parents as possible donors helps them integrating with the new country social and cultural context.

Our project is born after a careful research carried out in order to identify a safe, high quality, inexpensive and ethical itinerary, according to NetCord Fact Standards. We analyzed the ongoing situation of the original countries with the partnership of the major communities of foreign people; we looked for their knowledge about health and donation thanks to the collaboration of psychologists and cultural language mediators. Our first problem was that of informing immigrant people in their native languages in order for them to make informed and free choices.

We realized multilingual posters, an anonymous questionnaire aimed at assessing mother's knowledge about cord blood and their predisposition to donation, a questionnaire to midwives for identifying the problems of communication. Our more important difficulties are: fear of donation,

complicated access to prenatal care, no knowledge on cord blood donation, being afraid of this possibility being with fee, linguistic problems and cultural barriers.

The multilingual handbook is the result of our idea of bidirectional communication: it is easy to read and it also answers to the most frequent questions. The handbook is composed of:

- A data sheet reporting the most important information
- A short questionnaire with the main standards for non -suitability
- Informed agreement

All the information are written in the most represented languages in our country: English, French, Spanish, Bangla, Arabic, Chinese, Albanian, Romanian. In order to improve the communication with migrant women we also created some videos in different languages reporting foreign mothers' personal experience with the donation.

To get through immigrant women we cooperate with "Centro Aiuto alla Vita" an important association in Treviso that help mothers with economical and social difficulties, especially migrant women. A midwife takes part in their prenatal courses and informs mothers about donation.

This is our itinerary of donation: midwives of the family counselling awake women to cord blood donation and inform them about the dedicated donation. Midwives confirm the main exclusion principles and send the suitable woman to the transfusion center. The donor mother is interviewed by a midwife who confirms her suitability to donation and gives her all the forms and the blood sack she has to give midwives in the hospital.

From our experience the importance of communication appears. Using multilingual handbook it is very useful to inform mothers showing difficulties with our language and to make them learn about our culture and society. Reading information in their own language allows them to understand the real meaning of words and the real meaning of our message on cord blood donation. Using multilingual handbooks is the expression of our will to answer to their necessities and their different cultural needs. In consideration of illiteracy present in foreign women, the multilingual handbook was translated in multilingual videos.

In the near future, our purpose is that of increasing the number of donations, reinforcing cooperation between associations and organizations involved in the process of donation. Our project could become an operative model in the healthcare practice and its spread could help us improve procedures and operating instruments.

Our project won WE- Women for Expo competition and it will be presented at Padiglione Italia in a dedicated conference.

Other information about our project, personal experiences of cord blood donation and all news are available on our website: <http://www.adoces.it/donazione-sangue-cordone>.