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Blood Transfusion

COMMERCIAL BLOODBANKING There is no national blood donor program in the U. S. The American Red Cross collects about half, community and hospital banks about a fourth, and commercial banks the remaining fourth of the blood dispensed. Commercial banks pay \$4 to \$10 per pint to prisoners, hippies, addicts, and Skid Row residents, and this blood is the source of 90 per cent of the cases of serum hepatitis. The hepatitis rate following transfusion is 0.3 per cent for volunteer donors, 3.0 per cent for commercial donors. Tests for the Australia antigen can detect less than half of the blood capable of causing hepatitis. Because commercial donors sell blood cheaply, less effort is made to recruit volunteers; the commercial blood banks are increasing their share of the 7,000,000-unit annual need. Statistics regarding blood use and results are unreliable because banks that operate within state boundaries are not subject to Federal inspection. Blood from commercial sources should be labeled "high-risk" and avoided, if possible. (*Allen, J. G.: Commercial Blood in Our National Blood Program, Arch. Surg. 102: 122-126, 1971.*)