

Blood Donations and HIV Prevention in China

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Project Description: This exploratory research project will identify the specific cultural, social and structural factors that underlie low rates of voluntary blood donation in China. Currently, transfusion recipients are at risk for HIV and other blood-borne viruses due to the use of contaminated blood from illegal paid donors. Our research will guide public health programs in China that seek to increase voluntary blood donation. This is a collaborative project between CAPS and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Data collection will occur in Shanghai; overall project oversight and data analysis will occur in San Francisco, CA.

We will conduct in-depth interviews, field observations at blood centers and clinics, family and social network discussions, and analyze secondary quantitative data to explore the salience of six hypothesized cultural, social, and structural factors for shaping blood donation in urban China. Reluctance to give blood may be related to 1) the meanings of a gift, and reciprocity as the basis for kin and social relations; 2) notions of blood as a life force in Chinese medicine; 3) the gendered symbolism of blood and nurturance; 4) public mistrust of clinical procedures and staff training; 5) lack of access and information; and 6) demographic factors. As exploratory research, the project may uncover additional important factors.

The study's specific aims are to:

- 1) examine the relative importance of emic cultural beliefs that may shape blood donation;
- 2) examine the relative importance of social and structural factors that may facilitate or inhibit donation;
- 3) advance theoretical and practical public health knowledge of the processes by which motivations and intentions to voluntarily donate blood are formed among urban Chinese;
- 4) generate data necessary to determine the scope and feasibility of future research.