BLOODLESS SURGERY IN A PANDEMIC – SIMPLE, SAFE, AND EFFECTIVE

Nathaniel Usoro, Ofonime Essien, Queeneth Kalu

University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, Calabar, Nigeria

Introduction: Bloodless surgery is the provision of quality surgical care without the use of allogeneic blood, with the aim of protecting patients' rights and improving clinical outcomes. This paper aims to show how bloodless surgery has added advantages in a pandemic.

Method: We carried out a non-systematic review of literature regarding the current Covid-19 pandemic as well as bloodless surgery techniques, to highlight added benefits of bloodless surgery in a pandemic.

Results: Reports on Covid-19 pandemic, with confirmed cases of viraemia, highlight issues of donor blood safety and shortages, which the global HIV epidemic and Hepatitis B and C had earlier brought to focus. Bloodless surgery is a multidisciplinary practice which employs simple techniques in a multimodal combination specific to the patient, usually following a protocol. The techniques are grouped under four 'pillars' which are highlighted in this paper. Bloodless surgery programmes world-over have documented the safety and efficacy of the techniques of bloodless surgery, with lower morbidity and mortality than in transfused cohorts. A significant added advantage of bloodless surgery is the complete avoidance of transmission of transfusion transmitted infections. Non-reliance on allogeneic blood also takes away the negative effects of allogeneic blood shortages in a pandemic.

Conclusion: It is becoming an imperative that surgeons learn and practice bloodless surgery techniques, not only to protect patients' rights and improve clinical outcomes, but to limit disease transmission, especially in a pandemic. Patient care in bloodless surgery is also not affected by allogeneic blood shortages.

Corresponding author: Nathaniel Usoro, (MD, FWACS, FICS), Bloodless Surgery Unit, Surgery Department, University of Calabar, Teaching Hospital, Calabar, Nigeria

Email: nathaniel.usoro@unical.edu.ng

Abstract track: Outcomes of Bloodless Care