



My Doctor Knows Dr Mohd Haris Fadzillah Abdul Rahman

GIFT OF LIFE

That little you give goes a long way

IT is human nature to be charitable and all of us do it in our own ways.

Some donate money, some devote their time. Some share their expertise, some do it in private while others with fanfare. Little do we realise that there is a valuable commodity which most of us can share – our blood.

There are a lot of misconceptions about blood donation, but in truth, the process is very well-regulated and straight-forward.

Blood donation can be made at hospitals, but if you stumble across a blood donation drive at your office or local mall, do volunteer.

Before they take your blood, you will have your details taken and be asked to answer some medical questionnaires. They might also prick the tip of your finger before the process to confirm your blood group and note your iron levels.

Once everything checks out, especially your blood pressure and temperature, you will be asked to sit comfortably, arms stretched out. You might feel the sting from a local anaesthetic injection in the inside of your elbow, and the rest will be nice and easy. The nurse will check on you after and all should be done and dusted within

half an hour at the most.

The fun starts after that. Your bag of blood – usually 1 pint or 450 ml – will be sent to a laboratory for testing. A more sophisticated blood grouping test will be performed, and your blood will be screened for infectious diseases. Often that means HIV and hepatitis, but some centres do screenings for malaria and cytomegalovirus, as well. This process will make sure the blood will be safe when passed on to the recipient.

Much of the improvement in blood banking services take place in the background. That pint of blood will be split into various components – packed cells, platelet and plasma, to name a few, before being stored and later distributed.

The method of infection screening has also undergone a revolution. With the advent of nucleic acid testing (NAT), infections are detected at a much higher and faster rate, making transfusions safer. Blood donors, too, are screened and those who pass with flying colours are encouraged to become return donors.

One cannot underestimate the importance of blood transfusions. Typically, we associate transfusions with bleeding and trauma cases.



There is a precious commodity that we can share – our blood. – NORAFIFI EHSAN/The Star

In fact, modern medicine has come to rely on the availability of transfusions. Certain complex surgical procedures, such as heart bypass and aneurysm repair, are impossible without it. In treating diseases such as leukaemia, blood transfusion forms a key component of patient care.

In short, blood transfusion is an essential part of modern medicine and the need will continue to grow.

Therefore, your continuous support and donations are essential. Despite rigorous campaigns by the Health Ministry, we still face blood shortage during the festive seasons, including Ramadan and Hungry Ghost Month.

A more targeted campaign directed at family members of blood transfusion recipients is one way to recruit new donors. A study has recently concluded that busy lifestyles and fear of the donation

process are the main hurdles in recruitment. But, through more public awareness and easy access to donations, we hope that this can change.

Remember that sharing is caring, and that little you give goes a long way.

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Boost for China's 'Fields of Dreams'

CHINA may see a building boom of football pitches, as the government steps up its programme to provide facilities, financing and other aid to nurture talent and revitalise one of the nation's favourite spectator sports.

The central government will provide cash subsidies of up to two million yuan (RM1.2mil) toward the construction of every standard 11-a-side playing field, while smaller pitches for five-a-side and seven-a-side games will get one million yuan (RM600, 534) each, according to a proposal announced by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

"China still lags behind in terms of football facilities compared to other countries where football is well-developed," said the government's economic planning ministry, in a media briefing.

"The subsidies will enable football lovers to have easier access to more and better football pitches, while cutting down on their operating costs."

The programme, an extension of the 2014 edict by the State Council – the Chinese government's cabinet – to accelerate the development of the sports industry, foresees more than 70,000 pitches available for public use by next year. The world's most populous nation had about 10,000 fields at the end of 2016, with another 40,000 attached to schools of different grades, according to the NDRC.

Chinese President Xi Jinping is a self-professed football fan, and the sport has seen a spur in interest

since he ascended to head the government in 2012.

Over the past decade, Chinese companies were among the biggest buyers of English Premier League football clubs, a multibillion dollar shopping spree that was halted only in 2016 on concern that the debt-fuelled purchases would lead to capital flight and imperil the Chinese financial system.

Football, similar to a ball game that involved kicking called cuju played in China during the 2nd century BC, is hugely popular among the Chinese, with an average 23,277 spectators attending every game in the Super League, according to 2017 data.

China's Super League, as the highest tier of Chinese professional football is called, was also a major employer of global talent, with hundreds of players hired at various provincial and city clubs.

The Chinese government offers top dollar and 10-year visas to foreigners of "high value", including football players, top-tier scientists and researchers.

Austrian footballer Marko Arnautovic left English Premier League club West Ham United to play for Shanghai SIPG – a top Chinese Super League club – for £22mil (RM110.5mil).

Nico Yennaris, born in London to a Cypriot father and a Chinese mother, exchanged his British passport for Chinese papers in June, following John Hou Saeter in being the first foreign football players to be naturalised as Chinese citizens.

Former Everton youth teamer Ty



Shaolin soccer ambitions: A student warming up before football practice at the Tagou martial arts school in Dengfeng. Some 1,500 martial arts students signed up when it started its football programme in 2016.

Browning and Peru age group international Roberto Siucho at Guangzhou Evergrande were also in the process for naturalisation.

China's generous chequebooks extended to coaches. Spanish star coach Rafael Benitez is paid £12mil (RM60.27mil) a year as the new coach of Dalian Yifang, double what he was paid at the English club Newcastle United.

Provincial, city and county authorities are required to go further than ever before to nurture the sport, as the NDRC requires them to set aside land toward the construction of facilities. Companies that own football facilities should offer them to the public for free, or at discounted charges, the NDRC said. A variety of financing methods, from bank loans to the issuance of bonds, are to be made available for developers



Natural progression: Yennaris, also known as Li Ke, exchanged his British passport for Chinese papers in June. – Photos: AFP

toward the construction of the fields, the NDRC said. "To make football a potential industry and to develop it both in width and depth, planning shall be made for the mid-to-long-term

development and facility improvement for football, which lags behind other sports, and greatly promoting campus and social football," the State Council said in 2014. – South China Morning Post