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Convalescent Plasma (CP) for the Treatment of Covid-19 Infection: From the Past to the Future

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ABSTRACT

Sars-Cov-2 was identified at the beginning of 2020 in China. The contagiousness and the rate of lethality were high; on March 11th, WHO announced COVID-19 infection as a pandemic. Many therapeutic schemes have been tried but none have been conclusive. A vaccine seems to be available soon, but it will take a long time before being available to the entire world population.

CP could be a really good therapeutic option for COVID-19 treatment. Neutralization of the pathogenic agent by antibodies is the principle behind its functioning. Passive immunization is a therapy discovered by Behring and Kisato in the late 19th century. It has been an effective therapy extensively used to treat bacterial infections until the discovery of antibiotics, as well as during the viral pandemics of the 20th and of the beginning of 21st century; it still has many clinical applications (e.g., tetanus prevention). There are several ways to achieve passive immunization. CP is a safe treatment; some adverse effects are possible, but they are rare.

In 2017, the WHO Blood Regulators Network recommended CP as the first-choice treatment to be tested in the absence of authorized drugs to face any pandemic caused by an emerging virus. However, this strategy has been disregarded and, during this pandemic, it took time before CP clinical programs began. During spring 2020, FDA proposed CP to treat patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 disease and in August issued an Emergency Use Authorization for CP. First available data from several studies show the effectiveness and safety of CP for COVID-19 treatment. Anyway, there are also some studies denying CP effectiveness. These failures may be due to a wrong timing in the administration of CP or to a wrong selection of the treated patients (patients with already too severe clinical conditions, e.g. MOF).

Keywords: Sars-Cov-2, Clinical Programs, Pandemic, Convalescent Plasma

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