

## Why blood donors lapse or reduce their donation's frequency?

Finding effective ways to retain blood donors is crucial. Four percent of Quebec (Canada) citizens are registered in the province's blood bank. Only 6% of blood donors are registered as apheresis donors, but they supply 15% of all blood donations. Apheresis refers to a collection technique by which blood components (red blood cells, platelets or plasma) can be collected selectively. In Québec, whereas a whole blood donor may donate once every 56 days, a plasma donor may donate every 6 days, and a platelet donor every 14 days. Plasma and platelet donation processes last longer due to the return of saline and red blood cells (RBC) to the donor: a minimum of 45 minutes for plasmapheresis and up to three hours for plateletpheresis as compared to up to 15 minutes for whole blood donation.

This study seeks to compare, in a context of a voluntary and non-remunerated system, deterrents to blood donation among plasma/platelets (PPD), regular whole-blood donors (WBD) and lapsed whole-blood donors (LWBD). Among 1879 participants to our survey, 207 whole-blood donors (26%) and 148 plasma/platelets donors (31%) said that they reduced their donation frequency over the last five years. Participants to this survey also included 609 lapsed whole-blood donors, who did not donate in the past five years. We asked about reasons why they reduce or cease to donate blood and demographic variables.

The most chosen deterrent was "Time constraints related to work or studies" (43% for all respondents). LWBDs are those who cited medical reasons and lack of information most often. Several of them also gave reasons related to the (bothering) need to fill the questionnaire every time. WBDs seemed more concerned by time constraints: work/study constraints, family responsibilities and time spent waiting or donating blood were the main reasons chosen. PPDs most often chose "time constraints related to leisure or sport activities", "moving or being farther away from the blood drive I used to attend", and "difficulty accessing the blood drive". This serves to remind us that apheresis donation—, which is more frequent, takes more time and is more physically demanding—can be difficult for people to fit into their lives.

Obstacles to donating blood also vary based on gender and age. For women, medical reasons was the main reason cited: giving birth to a child and viewing blood donation as "a painful or difficult experience" were among their most common justifications. Men seem to have more difficulty integrating blood donation into their busy lives: they found the schedules very restrictive and they donate less frequently because of "too much time spent waiting or donating blood". Also, male WBDs were the most likely to cite "forgetting to donate" and "not receiving a telephone reminder" as reasons for donating less frequently. This reinforces the idea that men have a more difficult time to establish a routine by themselves. Overall, people in their twenties more frequently cited time constraints related to work/studies, exclusion(s) as a result of traveling abroad, and moving or being farther away from the blood drive. For people in their thirties, pregnancy and family

responsibilities were more significant factors. And, for people in their forties, health problems were more commonly cited than for other groups. These results are very much a reflection of events that typically occur at these different stages of life.

Blood collection agencies should develop new retention strategies tailored to specific donors' type, also taking into account the profiles of female/male donors, and events that typically occur at various stages of life.

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## **Publication**

[Why Do Blood Donors Lapse or Reduce Their Donation's Frequency?](#)

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