

Lifesavers to boost platelet count

Deepa Suryanarayan

With the rains, come dreaded diseases like dengue fever and leptospirosis, which launch a direct attack on the platelet count of the body. What follows is a mad rush to blood banks in search of platelet or platelet donors. This year, however, will be different, thanks to Lifesavers' Club which was formed by Doctors For You, an NGO, in 2007.

The Club, which now has 250 registered donors, keeps a record of platelet donors and even arranges for donations. "Last year, there was a sudden acute shortage of blood platelet at KEM, which made us think about starting an organisation that helps needy patients," said Dr

The blue print

- Anyone in the age group of 18 to 55 can donate platelet.
- Blood platelet can be donated twice a month and up to 24 times a year.
- It is a simple process which takes about an hour-and-half.
- Platelet is the only blood product which can be stored at room temperature.

Ravikant Singh, spokesperson for Doctors For You.

"There was also a serious shortage of platelet across the city post the 26/7 deluge, when cases of leptospirosis

and dengue shot up," recalled Dr Gunjan Sharma, member, Doctors For You.

With the city reporting two dengue deaths and its first leptospirosis death this monsoon, doctors say that they are better prepared to tackle the demand for blood platelet this year.

"Most of our donors are students from medical and engineering colleges. Platelet have a shelf-life of five days, so the donors are called whenever there is a need," said Singh.

However, the only hurdle is that platelet apheresis machines, through which platelet are collected, are available only at leading hospitals like KEM, Tata Memorial, Jaslok, Hinduja, Red Cross, etc. There are 12 machines in Mumbai and three in Thane.

6



Hindustan Times, Mumbai
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2007

HT THUMBNAILS

First platelet donation club



HEMANT PADALKAR

Members of the lifesaver club.

Mumbai's first platelet donation club was launched at Cama Hospital on Monday. State Blood Transfusion Council (SBTC) in association with NGO Think Foundation and a group of KEM Hospital doctors who have formed NGO Doctors For You' launched the Lifesavers Club for platelet donors. The club currently has 50 members. Platelets help blood to clot and are vital for people suffering from leukemia, dengue, malaria etc. **HTC**