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Attachment 1 – Focus Group Screener and Topic Guide

1. Draft Focus Group Web-based Eligibility Screening Questions

Welcome

Researchers at the Blood Systems Research Institute and University of California San Francisco's Center for AIDS Prevention Studies are conducting a study about blood donation. **This study explores men's views about blood donation policies that are designed to screen out donors with a history of male-male sexual contact.**

The Principle Investigators for this study are Dr. Brian Custer, PhD, MPH and Dr. Nicolas Sheon, PhD.

For more information about the study, you may contact the study team.

email: blood@ucsf.edu

phone: (415) XXX-XXXX

If you complete the screening questions and are found to be eligible, we will contact you with information on how to participate in a focus group. If you participate in the focus group, you will receive a \$50 Amazon.com Gift Card. The screening questions will take five minutes to complete.

ELIGIBILITY

You may complete the screening questions only one time. In addition, only a single member of a household is eligible to complete the screening questions.

PRIVACY

If you click the "Next Page" button at the bottom of this page to proceed with the eligibility screening process, specific electronic information will be automatically collected from your web browser and Internet connection. None of this information will be used to personally identify you. The information is used only to detect repeat visitors to this web page and how people were referred to this web page. If you do not continue to the next page, none of this information will be collected from you. This allows you to decide if you want to share the information with the study researchers. The information includes:

- *IP (internet Protocol) address*: Your computer uses an IP address every time you connect to the Internet. It is a unique number that is used to identify computers on a network, so that data requested (such as web pages) can be sent to the computer.
- *General information* about the web browser, type of device (Dell computer, iPad, etc.) and operating system you are using. This information is sent automatically by most web browsers when you visit any web site.
- The "*referrer*," which is information passed along by your web browser that references the web site you linked from to reach this survey.

1) Where did you hear about this study? Please be as specific as possible by telling us the name of an organization, establishment, or location of a study flyer, the name of a web site, or the type of person who referred you (such as a recruiter, or friend, or co-worker), etc. *

2) What sex were you assigned at birth?*

Male

Female

3) What is your age?*

under 18

18-24

25-34

35-54

55+

4a) Are you of Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin?

No

Yes

4b) How would you describe your race? (If multi-racial, check all that apply.)*

White/Caucasian

Black/African American

Asian

American Indian/Alaska Native

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Other (please specify _____)

5) In what country do you live?*

[A pull down menu of country names is provided]

() United States of America

6) In what state do you live?*

[A pull down menu of states is provided]

6a) What are the first three digits of your zip code? _____

7) In what city do you live?*

8) Have you ever donated whole blood or plasma at a blood bank in the United States? (Check all that apply)*

Blood

Plasma

Never donated blood or plasma

9) How long ago did you last donate whole blood or plasma in the United States?*

1-5 months ago

6-12 months ago

1-5 years ago

Over 5 years ago

10) Since 1977, have you ever had oral or anal sex with another man?*

Yes

No

11) How recently have you had oral or anal sex with another man?*

1-5 months ago

6-12 months ago

1-5 years ago

Over 5 years ago

12) Have you ever been tested for or been told that you have any of the following infections (Check all that apply):

	<i>Never Tested</i>	<i>Tested Positive</i>	<i>Tested Negative</i>
<i>Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Congratulations! Based on your answers, you are eligible to participate in our focus group.

Email

We will not share your contact information with anyone. It will be destroyed after the focus group is complete.

16) Please enter your email so we can send you the time and detailed directions to the focus group.*

17) Please provide us with a phone number so that we can give you a reminder call a few days before the focus group.*

18) Best time to call:*

morning

afternoon

evening

other: _____

anytime

19) Is it ok to leave a message at this number?*

Yes

No

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this eligibility survey.

We will contact you in a few weeks to provide information on the focus group time, location, directions and parking information.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact us at blood@ucsf.edu

2. Focus Group Guide

~~Blood Donation Rules Opinion Study (Blood DROPS) MSM Blood Donation Study~~ Draft Focus Group Topic Guide

Introduction

Consent process will precede the focus group. Have participants read over and sign the consent forms answering any questions they may have.

Hi, I'm Nicolas Sheon. I work at the University of California, San Francisco. As you know, we're doing some research to find out about views on the current blood donation policies that exclude people with certain risk factors from donating blood. The project is funded by the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health.

The goal of this focus group is to get more context and insight about [people's opinions regarding](#) blood donation policies. We'd also like to hear about any experience you've had of giving blood in the US.

This focus group will last about 90 minutes. We will be video recording the discussion to make sure that I don't miss anything you say, if that's OK with you. After the interview, the recording will be given a code, transcribed and, after we have analyzed the information, destroyed. Everything we talk about will be kept entirely confidential.

Before we start, I want to go over a few ground rules. Please do not repeat any personal information that is shared here. As they say, "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas." There are no right answers or wrong answers. In fact, we encourage you to disagree with each other, but please do so in a respectful way. Please try not to speak while others are speaking or start side conversations.

Are there any questions about the research before we start?

What have you heard about the [policies](#) on who is and isn't allowed to give blood in the US?

What risk factors exclude people from donating blood? Prompt: MSM; ever received money or drugs for sex the deferral is indefinite; paid anyone else for sex the deferral is 12 months, ever injected drugs for non-medical reasons.

Do you remember how you first found out about these [policies](#)?

What do you think of them?

How clear do you think these [policies](#) are?

Is the rationale for these [policies](#) clear to you?

Do any of these [policies](#) apply to you?

We're particularly interested in hearing your views on the criteria for men who've had sex with men.

The current [policy](#) says that any man who has ever had sex with another man since 1977, whether protected or unprotected, is not allowed to give blood.

What do you think about this [policy](#)? Is it fair? Too strict? Not strict enough?

What makes you say that?

What is your understanding of how “sex” is defined by staff who screen donors for eligibility at the blood centers?

Are there types of sexual contact that should count more than others?

How clear is the policy? Could it be better worded?

What would you say are the reasons for the [policy](#)?

Prompt: Do you see it as based on scientific evidence? About blood safety? Public interests?

Sensible for blood service to be cautious? Discriminatory? In what way?

From the Blood Bank’s point of view, the [policy](#) is designed as a population screening tool rather than as an individual assessment. How do you feel about this [as a strategy/argument]?

Some people calling for the criteria to be revised argue that, as blood is tested anyway, any new infections will be picked up that way. How do you feel about this?

How much do you see the [policy](#) as being about risk/sexual behavior? Orientation?

If we go back to thinking about the [policy](#) that excludes men who’ve had sex with men from giving blood, do you think it should be changed or kept the same?

If should be changed: What do you think the criteria should be changed to?

What [do you think](#) eligibility [should](#) be based on? Prompt: Time since you last had sex with a man? If so, how long? How many people you’ve had sex with? Whether sex was protected or not? Risky sex? Should there be exceptions and for whom? _

[What did you base your answer on? Prompt: What you've heard/read in the media, from friends, or from health professionals? What you've heard about the safety of the blood supply? What you have heard other people say about research?](#)

Some people argue that any potential risk to blood recipients outweighs the rights of individuals to donate blood. Where do you think the priority should be placed in this debate on safety vs. rights? - potential risk to blood recipients? Individual right to donate blood? [What do you think would be ‘fair.’ Would it be more fair if the policy were based on how many people you have had unprotect sex with recently, whether men or women?](#)

If you needed to receive blood yourself, what would you want the [policy](#) to be? Why’s that? Would the changes you’ve suggested make you more or less likely to offer to give blood? Why’s that? Prompt: Become eligible? More/less likely to go along with the [policy](#)? More about risk, less about discrimination? Clearer guidelines?

What about your friends/partner(s)? Would it affect whether they’d offer to give blood? In what way? Prompt: Become eligible? More/less likely to go along with the [policies](#)? More about risk, less about discrimination? Clearer guidelines?

[Research is underway in the U.S. to see if we can determine whether a shorter “deferral” time would still keep the blood system safe.](#) If U.S. researchers conclude that

[If U.S. researchers conclude that there is very low risk of transmitting HIV from men who have not had sex with a man in the past 5 years, what would you think about changing the U.S. policy toward donation? Do you see yourself ever being eligible to donate under any of these policies?](#)

If U.S. researchers conclude that there is very low risk of transmitting HIV from men who have not had sex with a man in the past 12 months, what would you think about changing the US policy so that men could donate blood if they hadn't had sex with a man in the last 12 months? Do you see yourself ever being eligible to donate under any of these policies?

Are there ways to improve the ways that blood center staff ask the screening questions?

Are there ways to make the screening questions clearer?

Would the type of person asking the questions lead you to answer differently? For example, if the blood center staff were gay identified, female, male, more comfortable talking about sex, less judgmental, what other criteria?

Would you prefer answering questions about your sexual behavior to a computer rather than with a live person?

Prompt: Using a kiosk? Laptop? Tablet such as iPad? Online from home before coming to blood donation center? Voice activated helpline to find out more about why you are/ aren't able to give blood?

Would changes to the policies make you more/less likely to go along with the policies?

Would other MSM be more or less likely to follow the revised policies?

How important to you are the policies around MSM's eligibility for blood donation?

We will be recruiting MSM to complete a short online survey about blood donation. Can you recommend places where we could advertise the survey to MSM in this area?

Has participating in this discussion changed your views on blood donation? (How?)

Thank you very much for your time. Those are all my questions.

What else did you want to add before we finish?