Rachel Donegan  
Transfusion Nurse Specialist - New Zealand Blood Service

I am an old fashioned Registered Psychiatric Nurse then went on to train as General and Obstetric Nurse I have an MBA from the University of Auckland.

I have been in the role of a transfusion Nurse Specialist for 10 years .

I work within ADHB and support Mercy/Ascot Brightside and Gillies Hospital . My geographical area of responsibility includes Northland and Tairawhiti District Health Boards.

I work with an excellent team of 5 other Transfusion Nurse Specialists who are based at the other NZBS blood banks in Waikato, Palmerston North, Wellington Christchurch and Dunedin and we are soon to be joined by a Hospital Transfusion Nurse Specialist at Counties Manukau District Health Board.

As Transfusion Nurse Specialist we strive for excellence and safety in Transfusion Practice.

**First do no harm: Ensuring the good of the patient is the highest priority**

What happens when a therapy thought to be safe demonstrates possible harm to our patients?

Blood has always been associated with life and vitality, however many publications associates transfusion with increased mortality, increased post-operative infection and longer hospital stays.

Patient blood Management involves a precautionary approach to the administration of blood components particularly red cells. Discussion of alternative strategies is relevant for all patients, not just those who choose not to accept a transfusion.

Patient blood management aim to improve clinical outcomes by avoiding unnecessary exposure to blood components.

It includes the three pillars of:

- optimisation of blood volume and red cell mass
- minimisation of blood loss
- optimisation of the patient’s tolerance of anaemia.

In May 2011 I was fortunate to travel to Englewood Hospital and Medical Centre New Jersey for an externship observing “Patient Blood Management and Bloodless Medicine and Surgery.” My experience identified processes that inform health professional of blood management and utilisation, reduce blood wastage and aid anaemia management.

My experience has identified the need to reinforce a restrictive transfusion strategy to reduce inappropriate transfusions. I hope to integrate these strategies into patient management at Auckland City hospital and adapt them to the New Zealand environment.