Amrita Guha
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The Benefits of Donating Blood

From a young age, children are taught that the act of giving is a noble and selfless one. That notion of nobility through giving is carried on through many larger scale operations, such as contributing to charity, volunteering to help the less fortunate, and donating blood. Donating blood is of the most heroic acts an average person can do if charity and volunteer work are difficult to do provided the circumstances. Though I have personally never donated blood, the act has always appealed to me. After researching the benefits of donating blood, I have an even greater inclination to donate blood. Donating blood is beneficial because it can save a life and because it is healthy to the donor.

Donating blood is conspicuously a way to save lives. The American Red Cross organization declares that approximately 3.3 million people donate blood each year, which causes 8 million transferable blood products to be distributed to patients annually. The generous spirit of one to donate blood leads to the saved lives of three. The organization also proves how if an individual donates blood every 56 days from age 17 to age 76, this individual would have donated 48 gallons of blood, which could save more than 1,000 lives. According to the Red Cross organization mentioned before, every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Donating blood can help those with sickle cell disease, those who suffer from cancer, and those who have been victims of car accidents, and etc. Sickle cell disease affects roughly 70,000 people in the U.S., and about 1,000 babies are born with it every year. Those with this disease require blood transfusions often throughout their lives. As for cancer patients, they may need blood daily for chemotherapy treatments. Furthermore, car accident victims may require up to

100 pints of blood, depending on the severity of the car accident. Hence, donating blood is essential for saving lives.

While donating blood is most definitely an act to save lives, many don't realize that doing so may help the donor as well as the receiver. For one thing, donating blood can reduce the risk of heart disease. The American Journal of Epidemiology explicitly states how blood donors are 88% less likely to suffer a heart attack, and 33% less likely to suffer any other type of cardiovascular negative consequences. This is said to be true because of a multitude of reasons. The most probable reason is that donating blood requires removing 225 to 250 mgs of iron from your system which prevents excess iron from hardening the arteries. This also allows for blood to flow through one's body easier as the blood vessels will remain healthier and for the iron level in one's system to be more balanced. The Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide supports the fact that blood donations allow for a reduction in the risk of heart attacks and strokes, as the donations reduce the blood viscosity. Blood donations also reduce the risk of cancer, as advocated by the Miller-Keystone Blood Center and the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. The National Cancer Institute did a study of 1,200 people where half of them donated blood twice a year for four and a half years and the other half did not. The blood donors had lower iron levels thus leading to a lower risk of cancer. Thus, donating blood helps the physical health of donors.

In conclusion, one may now further understand the benefits of donating blood. It not only helps others, but also benefits the donor. This research has piqued my own interest in donating blood, and I hope to do so in the near future. Donating blood is of the noblest charitable acts, and is praised throughout the world, and those who do so are the contemporary heroes of today.

<u>References</u>

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