

Youth and Blood Donation: Qualitative and Quantitative

Highlights Report

February 2013

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File name: J:\2509 Youth and Blood Donation\WP\2509 short report.doc

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1. BACKGROUND

Young people represent a key target for the UK blood services. It is critical to constantly generate new donor opportunities and attracting the younger generation of donors to secure future blood banks is central to any growth strategy.

Research was required to ensure that UK Blood Services fully understood this audience and really comprehended their attitudes towards giving blood. It was also imperative to understand any barriers that existed to giving blood.

The research was required to be able to view these attitudes within the context of their wider life choices and behaviour. Therefore a better understanding of how these individuals live every day, what media they consume and who are the influential figures in their lives was required in order to inform a targeted marketing strategy.

2. METHODOLOGY

For this research Accent conducted:

- Qualitative research: 39 paired face to face depths with current donors and non-donors
- Quantitative Research:
 - 733 online interviews and 375 telephone interviews with donors
 - 697 online interviews plus 100 face-to-face ethnic boost interviews (in London and Birmingham) with non donors.

This report summarises the key findings from both the qualitative and the quantitative research.

3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The main qualitative research findings were:

- 16-21 year olds share an optimistic outlook on life and the future and believe that anything is possible
- They live in the moment and have highly transient memories – what's important one day can quickly be forgotten the next
- They are highly reactive to things that are already part of their world
- They want to be taken seriously and treated as adults
- Family is massively important to them and has a huge influence on their life choices; friends are also important and particularly influential amongst the 16 and 17 year olds
- They believe that the world revolved around them and it is evident that they would respond best to 'me-centric' messages. Those from the higher social grades also exhibit a slightly more external focus and awareness of other events in the media
- Facebook and Twitter are massively important tools used to manage their social lives and obtain information. Twitter is increasingly popular especially amongst the 16 and 17 year olds
- Celebrities are polarising; but some are certainly aspirational. Celebrities play a role, albeit a limited one, in the day to day lives of these young people.

In terms of the attitudes of young people to blood donation:

- It is evident that having a parent or a close relative who gave blood was a considerable trigger to donating but there are usually multiple reasons leading donors to their first donation
- Donors are positively euphoric in describing a rush of pride and honour after donating, which whilst evidencing their altruism certainly delivered a strong 'me-centric' benefit
- The majority of these young donors feel somewhat 'removed' from the donating world as it is not 'top of mind' in their world. Equally potential donors view donation as not being at all in their world and do not associate the age of 17 with 'the age of giving' blood
- Young donors do not proactively seek out information; rather they expect to be completely managed and when attending clinics are not keen on waiting around to be seen. Being promptly seen is crucial to these donors. Their obvious requirement for close management is somewhat at odds with their demand to be treated as adults!
- At risk donors can be saved by better 'customer management', the use of modern technology and the solicitous management of those who had been turned away

- School/University talks are a primary source of knowledge and an effective call to action for donors. They are also considered to be a powerful way of educating potential donors
- Potential donors are aware that donating blood saves lives and is a good thing to do
- The main barriers are around a lack of understanding of what the donation process entailed, a lack of pro-activity on their behalf and a lack of any strong emotional concerns relating to donating.

In terms of attracting the attention of young people the following should be considered:

- Hard hitting, guilt inducing campaigns will capture their attention but will not be sufficient to generate a call to action for 16-21 year olds. They will respond to campaigns that are empowering and promote a sense of "what's in it for me". They need to be shown that they are a needed and valued audience
- They want meaningful campaigns delivered in a way that reflects their lives, including the inclusion of people their age and featuring people they are familiar with
- There is genuine shock that only 4% of UK population currently donate and this shock should certainly be leveraged as a call to action
- Campaigns should play on the age of 17 as a 'coming of age'. This will serve to deliver a sense of inclusivity and maturity. Concurrently it will both educate and capture attention
- Personalised letters via the Royal Mail are compelling and should be considered as one element in what will need to be a multi channel approach. A "Happy 17th Birthday" letter should be part of an extensive multi-media campaign
- In summary, it is apparent that donors want recognition, would appreciate a simple and speedy donation process and will need to be carefully managed via both traditional and digital media.

4. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Awareness of Giving Blood

What Respondents Were Doing

Three quarters of the respondents (77%) are in full time education, comparable across both the donors and non-donors.

The Circumstances Under Which Blood is Needed for Patients

The main circumstances under which these respondents felt that blood was needed are for patients during operations (89%) and for patients after operations (81%).

In terms of age, 16 year olds are much less likely to state that blood donations are needed 'for patients during treatment for cancer'. Twenty and twenty one year old respondents are much more likely than 16 year old respondents to mention that blood is needed for 'women during childbirth', whilst nineteen and twenty year old respondents are more likely than 16 year olds to mention that blood is needed 'for woman after giving birth'.

Age Group Most Likely to Donate Blood

Respondents felt that the age group most likely to give blood are those aged 26 to 35 years of age, followed by those aged 36 to 45 years of age (reflecting the qualitative findings that "it's an older person's game").

Age Of First Blood Donation

There is a high degree of uncertainty about the possible age of first donation with over half incorrectly answering (a quarter of respondents stating that it is 16 years of age and a further 28% suggesting that it is 18 years of age).

Forty three percent correctly identify the age of first donation as being 17 years of age. Respondents in England (48%) and Scotland (46%) are much more likely to be aware than those in Northern Ireland (28%) or Wales (23%).

Females are much more likely to state that donation was possible at 17 years of age (47%) than males (37%). Similarly males (33%) are much more likely than females (24%) to believe that the age of first donation is 18 years of age.

As might be expected, donors (62%) are much more likely than non-donors (14%) to correctly identify 17 years of age as the age of first donation.

Non-donors are more likely than donors to believe that 18 years of age is when people could start to give blood (47% vs 16%).

Whether a Full Donation Is Possible At First Visit

There is clearly a strong belief that a full donation is not possible the first time a 'donor' went to a donor centre – just over half would expect that a sample would be taken to be tested and they would be asked to come back to make a full donation.

Respondents in Northern Ireland (61%) and Wales (52%) are more likely than those in England (38%) and Scotland (44%) to believe that when they went to donate blood for the first time they would be asked to give a sample of blood to be tested and then asked to come back to make a full donation.

Males (48%) are more likely than females (39%) to indicate that that if they went to give blood for the first time they would be asked to give a sample of blood to be tested and then asked to come back to make a full donation.

The main differences in response, however, are by donor status and age:

- donors (78%) are much more likely than non-donors (24%) to expect that they would be able to make a full donation of blood on the first occasion of attending a donor session
- those aged 16 years of age (77%) are much more likely than any other age to believe that at the first donation they would be asked to give a sample of blood to be tested and then asked to come back to make a full donation at a later date.

Awareness of Nearest or Most Convenient Donating Session

Nearly three quarters (74%), especially those located in England (78%) and Scotland (75%), are confident that there are aware of the nearest or most convenient donating session. This reduced to just over six in ten respondents in Northern Ireland (61%) and Wales (62%) who are aware of where to donate, a significant reduction.

Whilst virtually all donors (93%) are aware of where they could donate, this reduced to less than half (45%) of the non-donors.

Those aged 16 years of age (41%) are much less likely than any other age to know where their nearest or most convenient donation session was, as shown in the following table.

Main Source of Ascertaining Nearest or Most Convenient Donating Session

For the vast majority the internet (83%) would be the main source for finding their nearest or most convenient blood donating session. The internet is significantly more likely to be a resource for those located in England (91%), than in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland (72%, 71% and 65% respectively).

Females are much more likely than males (85% vs 80%) to look to the Internet for information on the location of the nearest donation session.

Non-donors are much more likely than donors to look to personal acquaintances to locate the nearest or most convenient blood donating session including GP (43% vs 13%), family (35% vs 18%), friends (29% vs 14%) and school/college/university (26% vs 13%).

For those aged 16 years of age their family (51%) and their GP (45%) are cited as important sources for finding out the location of the nearest or most convenient blood donating session to a much greater extent than for any other age.

Preference for Type of Donating Session

Whilst over four in ten respondents (42%) indicate that they had no particular preference for the type of donation session they attended, respondents in England are much more supportive of appointment sessions (41%) (and conversely are much less likely to express willingness to attend a 'drop in' blood donor session - 16%).

Male respondents (31%) are more likely than females (25%) to express a preference for a drop in blood donor sessions.

Agreement with Statements about Donating Blood

Respondents are most likely to agree with the statement 'giving blood makes people feel good about themselves'.

Donors are much more likely than non-donors to agree that 'giving blood makes people feel good about themselves' (mean=4.53 vs 4.25) and 'giving blood is quick and easy' (mean=4.03 vs 3.47). Donors are also much more likely than non-donors to disagree that 'giving blood hurts' (mean= 2.32 vs 3.2) and that 'it's too much hassle to give blood' (mean=1.61 vs 2.42).

Males are more likely to disagree and females agree that they might 'feel weak or unwell after giving blood' (mean =3.03 vs 3.46). Similarly, donors are more likely to disagree and non-donors agree that they might 'feel weak or unwell after giving blood' (mean=2.98 vs 3.83).

4.2 Experience of Giving Blood

Who Donates Among Family/Friends

There is consistency across the countries in terms of those who had someone in their immediate network of family and friends who had donated blood, with most mentions for 'one or both of my parents' (54%) and 'my friends or friends' (42%).

The only notable differences are that males are more likely than females to mention a sibling (19% vs 17%), whilst females are more likely to mention friends (45% vs 39%) who had donated blood.

Whether Non-Donors Would Donate in the Future

Just over three quarters (77%) of non-donors indicate that in principle they would be prepared to give blood in the future, which is highest in Scotland (84%). .

Motivation for Donation

Blood donation is primarily driven by the idea of saving a life (72%) which is especially cited in England (83%). Respondents in England are also much more likely than respondents in each of the other countries to declare that they are motivated to donate blood in order to find out their blood group (49%).

Females much more so than males would be motivated to give blood thinking of the idea they are saving a life (76% vs 66%), to find out their blood group (41% vs 35%) and if they could donate with someone they know (38% vs 30%) Female more than males would also be motivated if someone they knew needed a blood transfusion (42% vs 33%), knowing more about the process of giving blood (25% vs 21%) and if someone they know told them about their experience of giving blood (26% vs 21%).

Non-donors more than donors would be motivated to give blood thinking of the idea they are saving a life (75% vs 70%), if someone they knew needed a blood transfusion (64% vs 26%) and if they could donate with someone they know (41% vs 32%). Furthermore, donors more than non-donors would be motivated if they knew more about the process of giving blood (35% vs 18%), if someone they know told them about their experience of giving blood (33% vs 27%) and hearing about how a blood transfusion saved someone's life in the newspaper (41% vs 25%). Finally, non-donors more so than donors would be motivated to donate by making it more convenient to give blood (27% vs 14%), making it more convenient by coming to work/college/school (36% vs 14%) and if they made it more convenient by making it available at a time that suits them (21% vs 16%).

Those aged 16 years of age would be more motivated than any other age group to give blood thinking if they could go with someone they knew to give blood, if someone they knew told them about their experience of giving blood, if they made it more convenient by coming to work/school/college and if someone they knew needed a blood transfusion.

Importance of 17 to 21 Year Olds Giving Blood

Just over half of the respondents (52%) believe that it was 'extremely important' for young people to donate blood.

Female respondents (55%) are more likely than males (47%), whilst donors (66%) were much more likely than non donors (29%) to state that it was 'extremely important' for young people to donate blood.

Seventeen (51%), eighteen (58%) and nineteen year olds (56%) are much more likely than sixteen year olds likely (34%) to state that it was 'extremely important' for young people to donate than any other age.

Importance of Academic Institutions Organising Activities or Events to Encourage Blood Donation

Respondents in all countries are equally likely to regard that it as important that academic institutions organise activities or events that encourage young people to donate blood, with 44% stating it to be 'extremely important'.

Again female respondents (46%) are more likely than males (40%) and donors (56%) are much more likely than non donors (24%) to state that it was 'extremely important' for academic institutions to organise activities and events that encourage young people to give blood.

Those aged seventeen years of age and beyond are much more likely to consider it to be 'extremely important' that academic institution held activities and events to encourage blood donation than those aged 16 years of age (21%).

4.3 Barriers to Giving Blood

Main Barriers to Donation

The two main barriers to giving blood are a simple lack of motivation to donate (with 34% citing this as their main barrier) and a fear of needles (with 33% stating this as their main barrier).

The main perceived barrier to donation in England is a lack of interest in donating (75% citing this in their top three), whilst in Northern Ireland (81% citing this in their top three) and Scotland (75% citing this in their top three) it is a fear of needles.

Sources for Finding Out About How to Donate Blood

Once again the Internet is regarded as an important source of information in England, much more so than in the other countries. Respondents in Scotland are much more likely to give 'family' a ranking of the most important source than any other country. Respondents in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are much more likely to rank Facebook as being the most important source than respondents in England.

Top Three things Young People Need to Know Before Donating

The main thing that young people need to know before deciding to give blood is information on the process ie what does donating entail (68%), followed by information regarding whether it hurts (57%).

Respondents in Northern Ireland are less likely to be interested in what happens when they go along to give blood but more interested in what happens to the blood once it has been donated (44%) and who was likely to get the blood once it was donated (34%).

Why Young Donors Stop Donating Blood

The main reason provided for donation reducing among this age group is that donating blood simply became a lower priority (49%).

Female respondents are more likely than males to state that stopping donating among young respondents was linked to moving home (48% vs 38%) and that donating becomes a lower priority (51% vs 47%).

Equally donors more so than non-donors are more likely to state that moving home was the catalyst to stopping donating (46% vs 41%), whilst non-donors consider that a lack of time (47% vs 42%) and that it became a lower priority (53% vs 47%) are key reasons for young donors stopping donating..

What would Encourage Young People to Donate Blood

The main thing that would encourage young people to give blood would be if the need for blood was because someone close needed blood (47%).

Young people in England (54%) and Northern Ireland (49%) are much more likely than those in Scotland (31%) and Wales (36%) to indicate that they would donate should someone close to them needed blood. Respondents in England (29%) are more likely than those in Scotland (20%) and Wales (16%) to also say that they would be more likely to donate should the donor session come to where they were eg school, college or workplace.

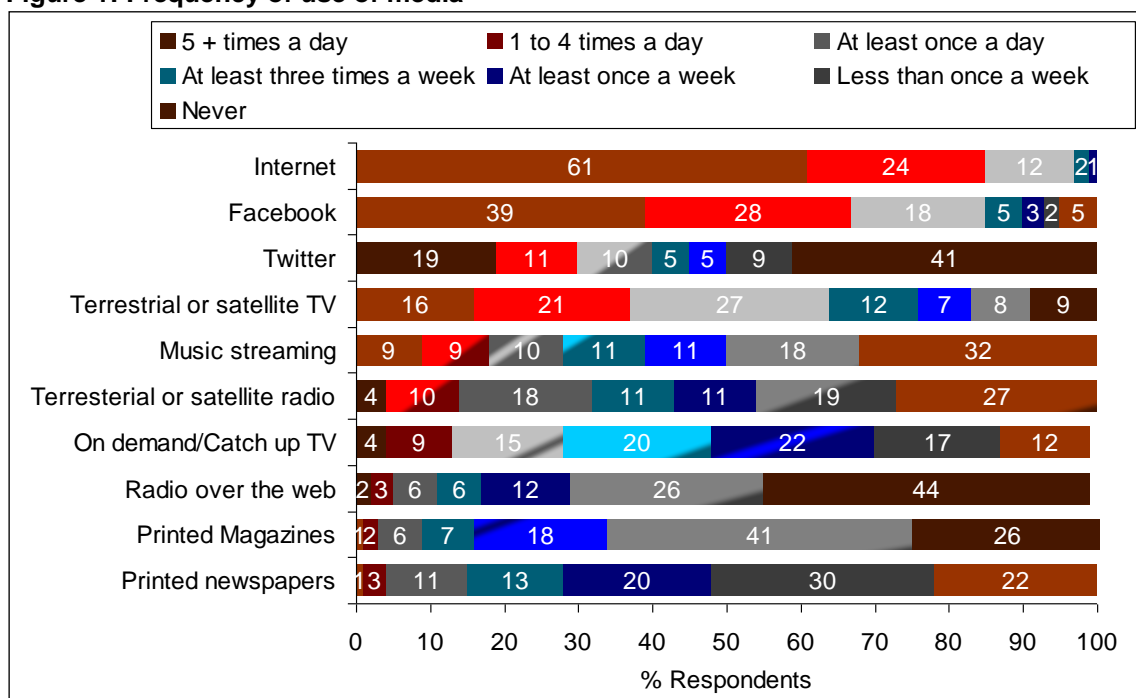
Non-donors (62%) are much more likely than donors (37%) to indicate that should someone close to them need blood they would donate.

4.4 Media Channels

The internet is the most highly consumed medium, with almost all respondents (97%) logging on daily. Of these just over six in ten log on more than five times a day and approximately a quarter log on up to four times a day.

In contrast, 14% look at printed newspapers at least once a day whilst less than a tenth (9%) look at printed magazines at least daily.

Figure 1: Frequency of use of media



Most Effective Way for Blood Services to Contact Young People

The most effective media for the Blood Service to contact young people is considered to be through educational establishments especially in England (56%) and Northern Ireland (49%). Following this, the internet is a very important resource particularly so in England (51%), Scotland (47%) and Wales' (50%), much more so than in Northern

Ireland (34%). Facebook is considered much more important in Northern Ireland (60%) and Scotland (56%) than in England (46%). Terrestrial TV is also much more important in Northern Ireland (25%) and Wales (23%) than in England (15%).

Non-donors greatly prefer both the use of educational establishments (57% vs 48%) and the internet (57% vs 44%). Donors prefer text messaging (44% vs 22%) and direct mail (35% vs 26%), reflecting the qualitative recommendations for a multi channel approach with different channels/messaging for donors/non-donors.

4.5 Things That Are Important to Respondents

Family (92%) and friends (91%) are most important to young people. Females are much more likely than males to place family first (68% vs 51%) and also to place friends second (53% vs 43%).

Table 1: Ranking of the top five important influences for respondents

	Total	1st	2nd	3rd	4 th	5th
Family	92	61	17	7	4	3
Friends	91	13	49	17	7	5
School/College/University	78	10	13	32	15	8
Food	57	4	5	13	20	15
Music	52	3	5	11	14	19
Social networking	32	2	2	5	9	14
TV/Movies	30	1	2	3	10	14
Sport	29	2	3	6	10	8
Fashion	18	1	2	3	5	7
Gaming	16	2	2	3	4	5
Celebrities	6	1	1	1	1	2

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research clearly showed that in terms of a media campaign young people need a hard hitting, guilt inducing campaigns to capture their attention juxtaposed with a message that empowers them and promotes a sense of duty and responsibility. They want meaningful campaigns delivered in a way that reflects their lives, which is typically optimistic and upbeat. Their world is 'me centred' and any campaign needs to appeal to their narcissism. Campaigns also need to feature visuals of people who could be family members or friends needing blood as this will be very persuasive. Family and friends form a key part of their lives.

Within this promotion a key message that needs to resonate is that giving blood will make you feel good about yourself and that you personally are responsible for saving the life of another. Young people will need to be convinced that they are needed for the success of the future blood donation service. There was clearly a willingness to donate blood at some point in the future and so any media campaign will need to encourage young people to donate now. There was genuine shock that only 4% of UK population currently donate and this should be leveraged. Again the message should declare, 'we need you'!

It was apparent that the age of first donation needed better promotion as there was a lot of confusion over this. Given their strong desire to be treated as adults these campaigns should play on the age of 17 as a 'coming of age'. This will serve to deliver a sense of inclusivity and maturity. Concurrently it will both educate and capture attention.

As the majority of these young people were still in education it was clear that promotion through schools will be a major key to successfully reaching out to young people. Young people, and females in particular, have expressed a strong preference for donating with others they know, and donation in an educational or work setting would support and endorse this desire.

The actual process of donation will need demystifying in order to provide greater transparency, including what the actual donation process entails and that donation is possible on the first visit. A further barrier that needs to be overcome is a fear of needles and the pain that may be felt when donating blood.

Better promotion of where donation sessions are to be held is also vital to encourage vacillating non-donors, with the use of the Internet the preferred medium for communication. Regarding communications, personalised letters via the Royal Mail were considered compelling but should only be considered one weapon in a vast arsenal. A letter should simply be part of an extensive multi-media campaign that includes eg Facebook and Twitter.

Time is of the essence for these young people and so the ability to book and adhere to a nominated time slot is crucial as they will not tolerate their wasted time.