


Improving Cancer Patients Safety, Confidence and Clinical Care Through Screening Healthcare Workers for Neutralizing COVID-19 IgG Antibodies and Establishing a COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma Bank


King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Center



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While we are all vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19, including death, no one is more vulnerable than immunocompromised patients, such as patients with cancer. These vulnerable populations are not only more vulnerable to COVID-19, but also more likely to be exposed due to the nature and location of their treatments. Thus a very real challenge exists, how immunocompromised patients with cancer continue to receive their life-saving treatments, without increased risk associated with COVID-19.

Recognizing the increased risk to their patients, King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC) formed a multi-disciplinary team to implement a comprehensive health care workers (HCW) COVID-19 screening initiative. This initiative enabled an understanding of the protective immune status of its HCWs and offer evidence-based guidance to HCWs to protect both the HCWs and their vulnerable patients. Using IgG antibodies against the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, the team was able to identify HCWs in need of additional vaccinations. Until a sufficient immune response was elicited, HCWs were required to provide COVID-19 PCR negative test results every 72 hours to be allowed to work. The team also established a COVID convalescent plasma (CCP) database and biobank to treat COVID-19 patients.

Dr. Osama Abu Ata, Section Head of Infectious Diseases remarks on the importance of this initiative. Physicians “never want to compromise the health of [their] patients, and the scary thing about SARS-CoV-2 is that healthcare workers can unknowingly be infected. By knowing our respective antibody status, we can confidently and consistently engage with our patients in safe and meaningful ways”. This strategy to protect HCWs and vulnerable patients was proved successful in that 5.3% of HCWs were found to lack a protective antibody response to COVID-19. With this knowledge, mitigation activities enabled an estimated savings of JD 1,200 per day for every cancer patient who does not contract COVID-19.

Due to the powerful and inspiring improvement to healthcare afforded by this clinical care initiative, King Hussein Cancer Center received 2021 UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence recognition of Achievement.

THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Understanding and maintaining healthcare workers’ viral status is essential for infection control and prevention programs.
- Consistent, data-driven vaccination programs for healthcare workers can substantially reduce the risk of vaccine-preventable disease in healthcare workers and reduce nosocomial transmission of vaccinepreventable disease to vulnerable patients.
- Mitigating preventable transmission of infectious disease to patients can significantly reduce the burden of care for health systems.

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