

20/20 Report on PolyHeme

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Did any of you guys catch this the night before last? It was a report on the new blood product called PolyHeme for use in severely bleeding patients and whether or not you knew/realized you are/were a potential guinea pig for the study? Basically, if you wind up being treated by a hospital participating in the study, the ONLY way to avoid being a participant is to be wearing a bracelet available from the company indicating you do not want to participate—that or be one of the ambulance passengers for whom no card-trick is performed. lol. I checked the website, and two hospitals in my state participate.

The show interviewed folks walking in downtown Denver to see how many of them knew they should be wearing a bracelet if they did not want to be a participant – none did. It also showed them interviewing an FDA big-wig, and the interview was cut short after what appeared to be one question by a lady standing off-camera. The doctor heavily involved in the study avoided direct answers like the plague, especially in response to the "faulty" study performed in the past when asked if that were really appropriate to be using on humans at that time. I believe there were incidences of MIs and death in some patients. There was one man who received the PolyHeme after a severe car accident who was in a coma for four months and something mentioned about the hospital having to switch to good ol' regular blood upon the request of a relative, which his mother did, and something about a 12-hour window.

The portion that bothered me most was that they showed an ambulance driver who, when asked how they determine who receives the PolyHeme versus good ol' saline drips, pulled a manilla-type envelope from a box with letters on it and said "This tells us who gets it and who doesn't." A lottery! lol.

There was no mention whatsoever of what the consequences are or could be, how the body processes the substance, etc. I mean, do you wind up having to have dialysis to clean it out afterward? Also, did you just save someone's life today who could wind up developing liver cancer or something else serious 20 years from now, rendering them a liver-transplant patient to suffer later?

Who knows, but it does bother me. I just can't believe it isn't the other way around, probably because they would not get many folks

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requesting a bracelet to be a volunteer for this study. I can see needing to use it for all seriously bleeding patients in an ambulance ride, especially when they are an hour away from a hospital, but continuing to do so after their arrival because their family doesn't know to request regular blood and just to push it as far as they can? Why on earth would they not have a set of medical criteria to establish who receives it versus pulling a card out of a box is beyond me.

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