



ITALY

Synthesis of the measures for the prevention of WNV transfusion transmission – 2014

As of 01 July 2014

GENERAL MEASURES

- Active epidemiological surveillance (entomologic, veterinary, human) in all the regional areas identified by the national WNV surveillance plan. Active surveillance of neuro-invasive WNV disease in humans has been in place nationwide year round since 2011; since 2012 in the Veneto Region an active surveillance of the WNV fever has been in place in the period July-November.
- Continuous and efficient communication and collaboration among involved institutional healthcare bodies (Regional Public Health Services, National Institute of Health, National Veterinary Reference Centre for WNV, Ministry of Health, Regional Blood Centres, National Blood Centre).
- National Epidemiology Centre's dedicated website for the notification and online consultation of probable/confirmed cases of WNV human disease.

SPECIFIC MEASURES

Blood donor selection and haemovigilance

- Strengthening pre-donation questionnaire and donor physical examination on (even mild) flu-like symptoms.
- Strengthening post-donation information on (even mild) flu-like symptoms.
- Implementation of specific haemovigilance procedures.

Trigger criteria for the implementation of WNV NAT testing (1 July – 30 November)

- a) Notification of WNV human case (neuro-invasive and non neuro-invasive disease);
- b) notification of WNV circulation through entomological (vector mosquitoes) and veterinary surveillance (wild birds and horses). Concerning entomological surveillance, in the regions of Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lombardy and Veneto the "Vector Index" approach has been in place since May 15.

In case of a) and/or b):

WNV NAT testing shall be timely introduced in the interested provincial areas (administrative districts) and shall be performed by ID technique. Testing shall be continued until 30 November.

In all the Provinces of Sardinia Region (*Cagliari, Carbonia-Iglesias, Medio Campidano, Nuoro, Oristano, Sassari, Olbia-Tempio, Ogliastra*) WNV NAT testing is implemented from 1 July to 30 November by ID technique, taking into account the geographic, climatic and organizational conditions of the island. National measures (temporary deferral of blood donors) will be applied following the notification of WNV human disease cases or of WNV positive blood donors.

Blood donor deferral

Nationwide, all donors having been for at least one night in the provinces where WNV NAT testing is introduced as a consequence of the trigger criteria a) and/or b) shall be deferred for 28 days. Alternatively, in order to avoid critical blood shortages, donors can be admitted to donate provided their donations are tested by WNV NAT.

Nationwide from 1 July to 30 November, 28 day deferral shall be applied to blood donors coming back from the following Countries: **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

28 day deferral remains applied year round to all donors coming back from the **USA** and **Canada**. Alternatively, in order to avoid critical blood shortages, donors can be admitted to donate provided their donations are tested by WNV NAT.