The Current Food and Drug Administration (FDA) blood donation deferral policy has remained in place for many years, and has even extended to the Declaration of Helsinki, a code of ethics for medical research. Today, although many high-risk individuals may donate blood, worthwhile, low-risk individuals may not. This paper discusses the changing dynamics of ethics, information, and opinion in the debate of whether or not to reconsider the FDA policy.

AIDS is a complex, there are no simple measures of the precautionary principle before any change in the policy can be made. The correct, and unwarranted. However, the FDA has insisted on upholding the scientifically rigorous reassessment of the policy because of the rationale that the original policy was precautionary. The concern, precautionary measures are one thing, but testing public policy, as data for the impact of alternative policies is unclear.

**The Revisiting Ban**

At the end of the 2004 ACBSA meeting, there was a unanimous agreement: “We believe that the current blood donation deferral policy is inadequate to support change to a specific alternative policy.”

ACBSA failed to create a precautionary policy for blood safety by following the precautionary principle, interpreted as alternative blood safety policies were considered, until the beginning of the epidemic. The time frame of policy assessment in order to make a new policy, and therefore the scientific evidence about impact before implementation, “We're busy trying to decide what will happen if any policy is put into effect.”

With a policy that protects the blood supply to some extent, no matter how discriminatory, the status quo can appear safer than the unknown.

**The Policy Today**

In 2015, the FDA officially adopted a proposal to change the lifetime deferral for MSM to a 1-year deferral. Below is a map that illustrates the key events in the policy changes over the past 30 years. It highlights the impact on the blood supply and public health.

**Selected References (please ask for complete list)**