

Blood group systems and antigens described in the last 20 years: an update

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: New information about blood group systems and antigens appears frequently but has not been recently collated as a single text. Books such as the *Blood Group Antigen FactsBook* by Reid, Lomas-Francis and Olsson provide an excellent reference source. However, the last edition was released a decade ago, and much has been discovered since then. New information is used to review requirements for red cell antibody screening cells, maintain rare donor databases, monitor clinical events and educate practitioners. The aim of this study was to summarise information elucidated in the past 20 years, with emphasis on significance in clinical practice. We aimed to provide a resource that may be useful to practising transfusion scientists.

Methods: Information was gathered by literature search.

Results: 122 blood group antigens and 17 blood group systems were described in the past 20 years (2003 – 2023). 31 antibodies were either implicated in transfusion reactions or haemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn or were considered to have the potential to cause these events.

Conclusion: Discovery and elucidation of blood group systems continues. Due to the rarity of clinical events, the clinical significance of many of the newer antigens and antibodies described is not yet certain. Nevertheless, it is important for transfusion scientists to be aware of new blood groups and monitor the likelihood of antibodies to cause transfusion reactions and/or haemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn. This literature review provides an update for transfusion scientists.

Key words: Blood group antigen, Rare blood group antibodies

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INTRODUCTION

Blood group antigens are inherited markers found on surfaces including the red blood cell membrane. Corresponding antibodies can have a range of clinical effects, including haemolytic transfusion reactions (HTR), haemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn (HDFN) and autoimmune haemolytic anaemia (AIHA).

The International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) classifies all known blood group systems and antigens. It defines a blood group system as a genetically discrete system of "one or more blood group antigens that are related by one gene, or one complex of two or more closely linked genes that are homologous" (1). A homolog is a gene that has a very similar nucleotide sequence to another gene.

There are several blood group antigens that cannot currently be classified as a system based on ISBT requirements. These form the 700 series (low prevalence antigens found at a population frequency of <1%), the 901 series (high prevalence antigens found at a population frequency of >90%) and independent collections which contain antigens that are related, but not yet fully elucidated at a genetic level (1).

Blood group systems frequently arise from an ancestral gene coding for a protein on the red cell surface, and polymorphisms are the result of single nucleotide changes. For example, in the Duffy system, the gene is FY and the reference allele is FY*02 (Fy^b), which encodes 4 antigens on the Duffy glycoprotein, a receptor for chemokines. FY*01 (Fy^a) arises from a change at nucleotide 125, producing an amino acid (aa) change at aa42 (2). Single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP) are responsible for most of the variation in blood groups.

Hybrid genes are responsible for the high degree of these polymorphism seen in the Rh and MNS blood group systems. These genetic variants occur at different frequencies around the world due to both selective pressures and geographic isolation. Null phenotypes (where no blood group structure in a system is present on the red cell) may be associated with a survival advantage. For example, Duffy null provides protection against some species of malaria; lacking the Duffy glycoprotein on the cell surface removes the ability of the parasite to bind and invade the red cell (2). Consequently, Duffy null is rare in countries where malarial parasites are absent, but common in malaria-endemic countries (3).

Advances in molecular technology in the past 20 years have greatly assisted the modern description of blood groups and allow classification of systems and antigens based on their exact genetic basis. As of December 2023, there were 49 genes determining 45 blood group systems and 360 blood group antigens, as well as 33 blood group antigens that have not yet

been classified into a blood group system (1). Of these, 17 blood group systems and 122 blood group antigens were discovered in the last 20 years (2003 – 2023).

This report provides an update on the blood group antigens that have been described in the last 20 years, including genetic basis of variants and the clinical significance of their antibodies where known.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A rigorous systematic literature search of the Wiley Online Library was performed, focusing on three journals: *Vox Sanguinis*, *Transfusion* and *Transfusion Medicine*. Information was also gathered from the Blood Group Antigens FactsBook (3rd ed.) and the Genome Aggregation Database (gnomAD) (4). ISBT nomenclature was used.

Data is presented in two sections: additions to systems and new systems. Data is tabulated throughout, with the column "clinical significance" referring to the reported potential of the antibody to the antigen described to cause haemolysis. The word "new" refers to antigens or systems described since 2003. Although some antigens described have been known for many years, the "year described" in tables refers to the year the antigen was fully elucidated at a genetic level. Where antigen frequencies are known to differ in different regions, more than one frequency is provided. When a single figure is given, it is assumed that antigen frequency is similar across many populations (4).

RESULTS

122 blood group antigens and 17 blood group systems were described in the past 20 years (2003 – 2023). Of these, the following have antibodies that are either clinically significant, or potentially clinically significant but infrequent: ENEV (MNS45), SARA (MNS47), P^k (P1PK3), CETW (RH63), VONG (KEL28), KEAL (KEL39), KHOZ (KEL41), DISK (DI22), YTGT (YT6), SCAN (SC7), SCAC (SC9), DOMR (DO7), GECT (GE13), INFI (IN3), PX2 (GLOB4), DSLK (RHAG3), Kg (RHAG5), THIN (RHAG7), Jr^a (JR1), Lan (LAN1), Vel (VEL1), At^a (AUG2), ATML (AUG3), ATAM (AUG4), Sd^a (SID1), MAM (MAM1), Emm (EMM1), Er3 (ER3), ERSA (ER4), ERAMA (ER5) and CD36.1. Anti-Kg, anti-Jr^a, anti-Lan, anti-Vel, anti-At^a and Anti-Sd^a were clinically significant antibodies seen in multiple clinical cases. These six antibodies were discovered more than 20 years ago, but the respective blood group systems were fully elucidated more recently.

Section 1. Additions to Blood Group Systems

002 - MNS

Table 1. New antigens in the MNS system (5-12)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
ENDA	44	2008	>99%	Unknown
ENEV	45	2010	>99%	Mild HTR
MNTD	46	2006	<1%	Unknown
SARA	47	2014	<1%	Severe HDFN
KIPP	48	2015	<1%	Unknown
JENU	49	2016	Most populations >99% Less frequent in Southeast Asians	Unknown
SUMI	50	2020	<1%	Unlikely

ENDA, KIPP and JENU are the result of hybrids between Glycophorin A (GYPA) and Glycophorin B (GYPB), while ENEV, MNTD, SARA and SUMI are the result of SNPs. One antithetical pair of antigens was discovered: ENDA with DANE (MNS32, previously described).

One antigen, SARA, was previously assigned 700.052, and moved to the MNS blood group system when its genetic basis was identified. It is a low prevalence antigen found in one Australian and one Canadian family, and its antibody has caused severe HDFN in one newborn (9).

003 - P1PK

Table 2. New antigens in the P1PK system (2, 13-14)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
P ^k	3	2010	>99%	Probable
NOR	4	2012	<1%	Unknown

The P1PK system was renamed from P after the P and P^k antigens were found to be tied to the same gene - Alpha 1,4-Galactosyltransferase (*A4GALT*), which is found on 22q13.2 chromosome (2). During this change, P^k (P1PK3) was moved from the now obsolete Globoside collection into the P1PK system. Globoside is now a blood group system in its own right. (system 028, Table 18).

P^k (previously 209.002) is only expressed strongly on the cells of P₁^k and P₂^k individuals (2). Inactivating mutations in the B3GALNT1 gene cause an increase in expression of P^k. Rare inactivating mutations in *A4GALT* lead to the P^k negative null phenotype (p). Anti-P^k is usually found alongside anti-P and anti-P1 (anti-PP1P^k), which can cause severe transfusion reactions, spontaneous abortions and HDFN (2).

004 - Rh

Table 3. New antigens in the Rh system (15-22)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
CENR	56	2004	<1%	Unknown
CEST	57	2009	>99%	Unknown
CELO	58	2011	>99%	Unknown
CEAG	59	2015	>99%	Unknown
PARG	60	2017	<1%	Unknown
CEVF	61	2013	<1%	Unknown
CEWA	62	2012	>99%	Unknown
CETW	63	2021	<1%	HDFN

CENR, CEST, CELO, CEAG, PARG and CEVF are caused by hybrid RHCE alleles, while CEWA and CETW are the result of SNPs in *RHCE*. Two antithetical pairs of antigens were discovered: CEST and JAL (RH48), and CELO and Crawford (RH43).

Of the eight antigens recently assigned to the Rh blood group system, only CETW is known to be clinically significant, having caused HDFN in one indigenous Australian newborn (22).

005 - Lutheran

Table 4. New antigens in the Lutheran system (23-30)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
LURC	22	2009	>99%	Unknown
LUIT	23	2023	>99%	Unknown
LUGA	24	2023	>99%	Unknown
LUAC	25	2016	>99%	Unknown
LUBI	26	2016	>99%	Unknown
LUYA	27	2018	>99%	Unknown
LUNU	28	2019	>99%	Unknown
LURA	29	2019	>99%	Unknown
LUOM	30	2023	>99%	Unknown

All new antigens in the Lutheran blood group system are the result of SNPs in Basal Cell Adhesion Molecule (*BCAM*).

LUAC has some relevance to New Zealand, as its antibody was found in a Māori patient in Auckland (26). Its clinical significance is unknown.

006 - Kell

Table 5. New antigens in the Kell system (31-43)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
VONG	28	2003	<1%	Mild HDFN
KALT	29	2006	>99%	Unknown
KTIM	30	2006	>99%	Unknown
KYO	31	2006	Most populations <1% Japanese 1.5%	Unknown
KUCI	32	2013	>99%	Unknown
KANT	33	2013	>99%	Unknown
KASH	34	2010	>99%	Unknown
KELP	35	2010	>99%	Unknown
KETI	36	2011	>99%	Unknown
KHUL	37	2011	>99%	Unknown
KYOR	38	2012	<1%	Unknown
KEAL	39	2016	<1%	Severe HDFN
KHIZ	40	2022	>99%	Unknown
KHOZ	41	2022	<1%	HTR

All new antigens in the Kell blood group system are the result of SNPs in Kell metallo-endopeptidase (*KEL*); *KELP* is unique in that it is a result of two separate SNPs in *KEL*. Four pairs of antithetical antigens have been identified; *VONG* with *VLAN* (*KEL25*, previously identified), *KYO* with *KYOR*, *KHUL* with *KEAL*, and *KHIZ* with *KHOZ*.

010 - Diego

Table 6 New antigens in the Diego system (44,45)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
DISK	22	2010	>99%	Probable
DIST	23	2021	<1%	Unknown

Both new antigens in the Diego blood group system are the result of SNPs in Solute Carrier Family 4 Member 1 (*SLC4A1*). *DISK* is antithetical to *Wu* (*DI9*). Anti-*DISK* was found in an Irish proband after she miscarried, but its clinical relevance to the miscarriage was uncertain (44).

011 - Yt

Table 7. New antigens in the Yt system (46-48)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
YTEG	3	2017	>99%	Unknown
YTLI	4	2018	>99%	Unknown
YTOT	5	2018	>99%	Unknown
YTGT	6	2022	>99%	HTR

All new antigens in the Yt blood group system are the result of SNPs in *acetylcholinesterase (ACHE)*. Anti-YTGT was found in two unrelated Native American patients, one of whom experienced an acute HTR following transfusion (48).

013 - Scianna

Table 8 New antigens in the Scianna system (49-52)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
STAR	5	2005	>99%	Unknown
SCER	6	2005	>99%	Unknown
SCAN	7	2005	>99%	HTR
SCAR	8	2020	>99%	Unknown
SCAC	9	2022	>99%	Probable

All new antigens in the Scianna blood group system are the result of SNPs in Erythroblast Membrane Associated Protein (*ERMAP*).

In vitro tests suggest anti-SCAR is unlikely to be clinically significant, and there was no evidence of haemolysis after one SCAR negative proband received an antigen mismatched transfusion (51). However, the patient was receiving hydroxyurea at the time and may have otherwise developed anti-SCAR at high enough titres to be clinically significant.

014 - Dombrock

Table 9. New antigens in the Dombrock system (53-57)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
DOYA	6	2010	>99%	Unknown
DOMR	7	2010	>99%	Possible HDFN
DOLG	8	2011	>99%	Unknown
DOLC	9	2013	>99%	Unknown
DODE	10	2015	>99%	Unknown

All new antigens in the Dombrock blood group system are the result of SNPs in ADP-Ribosyltransferase 4 (*ART4*); DOMR is the result of two SNPs in *ART4*. Anti-DOMR caused a positive DAT, jaundice and reticulocytosis in a newborn (54).

015 - Colton

Table 10. New antigens in the Colton system (58)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
Co4	4	2010	>99%	Unknown

Co4 is the result of a SNP in Aquaporin 1 (*AQP1*).

016 - Landsteiner-Wiener

Table 11. New antigens in the Landsteiner-Wiener system (59)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
LWEM	8	2022	>99%	Unknown

LWEM is the result of a SNP in Intercellular Adhesion Molecule-4 (*ICAM4*).

020 - Gerbich

Table 12. New antigens in the Gerbich system (60-63)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
GEIS	9	2004	<1%	Unknown
GEPL	10	2008	>99%	Unknown
GEAT	11	2008	>99%	Unknown
GETI	12	2008	>99%	Unknown
GECT	13	2020	>99%	HTR
GEAR	14	2016	>99%	Unknown

All antigens in the Gerbich blood group system are the result of SNPs in Glycophorin C (*GYPC*).

021 - Cromer

Table 13. New antigens in the Cromer system (64-71)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
SERF	12	2004	>99%	Unknown
ZENA	13	2007	>99%	Unknown
CROV	14	2007	>99%	Unknown
CRAM	15	2007	>99%	Unknown
CROZ	16	2010	>99%	Unknown
CRUE	17	2012	>99%	Unknown
CRAG	18	2012	>99%	Unknown
CROK	19	2012	>99%	Unknown
CORS	20	2020	>99%	Unknown

All new antigens in the Cromer blood group system are the result of SNPs in Decay accelerating factor (*DAF*). Anti-CRUE was found in Auckland in a Thai patient (68)

022 - Knops

Table 14. New antigens in the Knops system (72-76)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
KCAM	9	2005	Caucasians 98% West Africans 20%	Unknown
KDAS	10	2020	Europeans 39% Africans 95.8% South Asians 67.7%	Unknown
DACY	11	2020	Europeans 96% Africans 95% South Asians 82%	Unknown
YCAD	12	2020	Europeans 35% Africans 40% South Asians 67%	Unknown
KNMB	13	2023	>99%	Unknown

All new antigens in the Knops blood group system are caused by SNPs in Complement Component (3b/4b) Receptor 1 (*CR1*). KCAM and KDAS are antithetical antigens, as are DACY and YCAD.

023 - Indian

Table 15 New antigens in the Indian system (77-79)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
INFI	3	2007	>99%	Mild HDFN
INJA	4	2007	>99%	Unknown
INRA	5	2016	>99%	Unknown
INSL	6	2018	>99%	Unlikely

All new antigens in the Indian blood group system are caused by SNPs in *CD44*.

024 - OK

Table 16. New antigens in the OK system (80,81)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
OKGV	2	2003	>99%	Unknown
OKVM	3	2006	>99%	Unknown

Both new antigens in the OK blood group system are caused by SNPs in Basigin (*BSG*).

026 - John Milton Hagen

Table 17. New antigens in the John Milton Hagen system (82-86)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
JMHK	2	2006	>99%	Unknown
JMHL	3	2006	>99%	Unknown
JMHG	4	2006	>99%	Unknown
JMHM	5	2006	>99%	Unknown
JMHQ	6	2010	>99%	Unknown
JMHN	7	2019	>99%	Unknown
JMHA	8	2020	>99%	Unlikely

All new antigens in the JMHL blood group system are the result of SNPs in Semaphorin 7A (*SEMA7A*).

Section 2. New Systems

028 – Globoside (promoted from a collection to a system in 2003).

In 2003 the system contained one antigen P but new antigens have subsequently been added (Table 18). The Globoside blood group system is encoded by Beta-1,3-N-Acetylgalactosaminyltransferase 1 (*B3GALNT1*), which is found on 3q26 chromosome (2). The gene encodes an enzyme which transfers *N*-acetylgalactosamine onto the P^k antigen in the P1PK system to form P.

Table 18. New antigens in the Globoside system (87,88)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
PX2	4	2011	>99%	Probable
ExtB	5	2019	Caucasians 13% African Americans 24% Asians 31%	Unknown

Anti-PX2 is found in patients with the very rare P^k phenotype. This phenotype arises from inactivations of the *B3GALNT1* gene. Usually, anti-PX2 is found alongside other antibodies (anti-P, anti-P1) so its clinical significance is hard to determine. PX2 is abundant on p cells (P1PK negative) so patients with anti-PX2 have an incompatible crossmatch with cells from p individuals. ExtB is associated with the B antigen. Anti-ExtB is found in group O individuals, as well as group AB and B P^k individuals, and reacts with B cells that are P1PK-.

030 - Rh-Associated Glycoprotein (RHAG) (promoted to a system in 2008).

Antigens described since 2003 are listed in Table 19.

The RHAG blood group system is encoded by Rh-Associated Glycoprotein (*RHAG*), which is found on 6p21.3 chromosome (2). The gene encodes a multi-pass membrane glycoprotein which is associated with RhD, RhCE, GPB, LW and CD47. This complex of molecules helps to maintain erythrocyte membrane integrity. RHAG is also involved in transporting some molecules and cations across the red cell membrane. It is expressed only on RBCs, but RHAG homologs can be found in other tissues.

Table 19. New antigens in the RHAG system (89-95)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
DUCLOS	1	2010	>99%	Unknown
O ^l	2	2010	<1%	Unknown
DSLK	3*	2010	>99%	Probable
Kg	5	2020	<1%	Severe HDFN Probable HTR
SHER	6	2022	<1%	Unknown
THIN	7†	2023	<1%	HDFN
* "Provisional number assigned awaiting further examples of the DSLK- phenotype to confirm the polymorphism." (1) † Provisional number assigned.				

All antigens in the RHAG blood group system are the result of SNPs in *RHAG*. One new pair of antithetical antigens were discovered: DSLK and Kg. Three of the antigens were identified more than 20 years ago but elucidated more recently: DUCLOS (previously 901.013), O^l (previously 700.043) and Kg (previously 700.045). Kg is present in approximately 0.2% of the Japanese population (90). Anti-Kg has caused two severe cases of HDFN that required exchange transfusion, and in vitro tests have suggested that it is capable of causing HTRs (90,93). In vitro tests suggest that the antibody to its antithetical antigen, DSLK, may also be clinically significant.

031 - FORS

The FORS blood group system is encoded by Globoside Alpha-1,3-N-Acetylgalactosaminyltransferase 1 (*GBGT1*), which is found on 9q34.2 chromosome (2). The gene encodes a glycosyltransferase, which catalyses the formation of Forssman glycolipids. These glycolipids are usually seen in animals and humans have corresponding naturally occurring antibodies.

Table 20. Antigens in the FORS system (96)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
FORS1	1	2013	<1%	Unknown

FORS1 is caused by a SNP in *GBGT1*.

032 - JR

The JR blood group system is encoded by ATP Binding Cassette Subfamily G Member 2 (*ABCG2*), which is found on 4q22.1 chromosome (97). The gene encodes an ATP-dependent transporter that can transport a wide specificity of substrates, particularly uric acid. It is expressed on a range of cells, including the placenta and epithelial cells.

Table 21. Antigens in the JR system (97-102)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
Jr ^a	1	2012	>99%	Severe HDFN HTR

The null phenotype of Jr^a (previously 901.005) is caused by mutations in *ABCG2*. Jr(a-) has a prevalence of 0.03% in Japanese and <0.01% of most other populations. Anti-Jr^a is clinically significant, having caused severe and even fatal HDFN, and sometimes causes HTRs (98-102).

033 - LAN

The LAN blood group system is encoded by ATP-binding Cassette Subfamily B Member 6 (*ABCB6*), which is found on 2q36 chromosome (103). The gene encodes an ATP-dependent transport protein which transports heme and its precursors across the red blood cell membrane and outer mitochondrial membrane (104).

Table 22. New antigens in the LAN system (103,105)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
Lan	1	2012	>99%	Severe HDFN Probable HTR

The null phenotype of Lan (previously 901.002) is caused by inactivating mutations in *ABCB6*.

034 - Vel

The Vel blood group system is encoded by Small Integral Membrane Protein 1 (*SMIM1*), which is found on chromosome 1p36.32 (106). It encodes a transmembrane protein and is found in a range of tissues, particularly in the bone marrow, testes and kidney (107).

Table 23 Antigens in the Vel system (108-113)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
Vel	1	2013	>99%	HDFN Severe HTR AIHA

The null phenotype of Vel is caused by inactivating mutations in *SMIM1*. Anti-Vel is capable of causing AIHA, severe HTR and rarely HDFN (109-113).

035 - CD59

The CD59 blood group system is encoded by *CD59* which is found on 11p13 chromosome (114). The gene encodes a glycoprotein that has a role in complement regulation (inhibition of the MAC complex) (115). It is expressed on all blood cells, endothelial cells and epithelial cells. It is also present in tear fluid (116).

Table 24. Antigens in the CD59 system (117)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
CD59.1	1	2014	>99%	Unknown

Anti-CD59.1 was found in a patient with a CD59 deficiency. Very few cases of CD59 deficiency have been reported; seven as of 2014, and three distinct CD59-null alleles were implicated. Of several transfusions given to one proband, only one post-transfusion test revealed a transiently positive DAT with no clinical signs of HTR (117).

036 - Augustine

The Augustine blood group system is encoded by Solute Carrier Family 29 Member 1 (*SLC29A1*), which is found on 6p21.1 chromosome (118). The gene encodes the ENT1 protein, which may have a role in adenosine transport and erythroid differentiation, as well as being involved in regulating bone metabolism (119). This protein is found ubiquitously in human tissues.

Table 25. Antigens in the Augustine system (119-124)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
AUG1	1	2015	>99%	Unknown
At ^a	2	2015	>99%	Moderate HDFN Severe HTR AIHA
ATML	3	2018	<1%	Severe HDFN
ATAM	4	2023	>99%	Probable

All antigens in the Augustine blood group system are the result of SNPs in *SLC29A1*, except for AUG1 whose loss is associated with the rare Augustine null phenotype. Anti-At^a has been found in a number of African American individuals. In vitro tests suggest that anti-At^a is clinically significant, and it has been implicated in cases of HDFN (one of which was moderate), HTRs (one of which was severe) and AIHA (120-122).

037 - KANNO

The KANNO blood group system is encoded by Prion Protein (*PRNP*), which is found on 20p13 chromosome (125). The gene encodes prion protein, a glycoprotein found in the brain and other tissues. It may have a role in copper transport and neuroprotection, as mutations are associated with Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (126). Its function in RBCs is unknown

Table 26. Antigens in the KANNO system (125,127,128)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
KANNO1	1	2020	Most populations >99% Japanese 94.2% Southeast Asians 96%	Unknown

The clinical significance of anti-KANNO is unknown, but among 16 reported cases of pregnancy and 7 reported cases of transfusion there were no cases of HDFN or HTR, with only one newborn testing DAT positive (127).

038 - SID

The SID blood group system is encoded by Beta-1,4-N-Acetyl-Galactosaminyltransferase 2 (*B4GALNT2*), which is found on 17q21.32 chromosome (129). The gene encodes an enzyme which catalyses the formation of the carbohydrate determining the Sd^a antigen. This enzyme is absent on gastrointestinal cancer cells, suggesting it may play a role in eliminating metastasis. It is found in the kidney, colon and stomach, as well as human serum, milk, meconium and urine.

Table 27. Antigens in the SID system (130-133)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
Sd ^a	1	2019	Most populations 91%	HTR

The loss of Sd^a is associated with mutations in the *B4GALNT2* gene. 91% of the population carries this antigen on red cells, but only 4% are Sd^a negative in all tissues and therefore capable of making anti-Sd^a (130). Anti-Sd^a can cause HTR, particularly when RBCs of the rare Cad (Sda++) phenotype are transfused, as these react more strongly with anti-Sd^a (132,133).

039 - CTL2

The CTL2 system is encoded by Solute Carrier Family 44 Member 2 (*SLC44A2*), which is found on 19p13.2 chromosome (134,135). The gene encodes the CTL2 glycoprotein, which has a role in choline transport and carries HNA-3 (human neutrophil antigen), the antibody of which causes severe and fatal transfusion-related acute lung injury (TRALI). CTL2 is found in a variety of tissues, notably blood cells, inner ear and lung endothelium (135).

Table 28. Antigens in the CTL2 system (136)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
VER	1	2019	>99%	Unknown
RIF	2	2019	>99%	Unknown

Anti-VER was found in one CTL2 null proband (136). RIF is the result of a SNP in *SLC44A2*.

040 - PEL

The PEL blood group system is encoded by ATP Binding Cassette Subfamily C Member 4 (*ABCC4*), which is found on 13q32.1 chromosome (137). The gene encodes an ATP-dependent transport protein which transports a variety of molecules and is involved in erythropoiesis (138). It is found in a variety of tissues, particularly the prostate and kidney (139).

Table 29. Antigens in the PEL system (140)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
PEL	1	2020	>99%	Unknown

The loss of PEL (previously 901.014) is caused by a deletion of *ABCC4*.

041 - MAM

The MAM blood group system is encoded by Epithelial Membrane Protein 3 (*EMP3*), which is found on 19q13.33 chromosome (141). The gene encodes the EMP3 protein, which has a role in tumour suppression (142). It is expressed in the ovary, rectum, liver, kidney and embryonic lung (142).

Table 30. Antigens in the MAM system (143,144)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
MAM	1	2020	>99%	Severe HDFN Probable HTR

The loss of MAM (previously 901.016) is caused by various inactivating mutations in *EMP3*. A total of eleven MAM negative probands have been described, including one in New Zealand (143). Anti-MAM causes severe and fatal HDFN, and in vitro tests suggest that anti-MAM is capable of causing HTR (141,144).

042 - EMM

The EMM blood group system is encoded by Phosphatidylinositol Glycan Anchor Biosynthesis Class G (*PIGG*), on 4p16.3 chromosome (145). The gene encodes an enzyme that has a role in glycosylphosphatidylinositol (GPI) anchor synthesis. Mutations in *PIGG* are associated with intellectual disability, seizures and hypotonia (146).

Table 31. Antigens in the EMM system (147-150)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
Emm	1	2021	>99%	HTR

The loss of Emm (previously 901.008) is caused by inactivating mutations in *PIGG*. Anti-Emm is thought to be a naturally occurring antibody in Emm negative individuals and has caused one acute HTR (148,149). In vitro tests suggest that a ti-Emm does not cause HDFN, and one recorded pregnancy was unaffected by anti-Emm, but this evidence is not conclusive (150).

043 - ABCC1

The ABCC1 blood group system is encoded by ATP Binding Cassette Subfamily C Member 1 (*ABCC1*), which is found on 16p13.11 chromosome (137). The gene encodes an ATP-binding cassette (ABC) transporter, which plays a role in protection of kidney epithelial cells. The protein is expressed ubiquitously in almost all human tissues (151).

Table 32. Antigens in the ABCC1 system (137)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
WLF	1	2020	>99%	Unknown

The rare null phenotype is caused by an intron deletion (137).

044 - Er

The Er blood group system is encoded by Piezo Type Mechanosensitive Ion Channel Component 1 (*PIEZO1*), which is found on 16q23-q24 chromosome (152). The gene encodes a red cell calcium channel, which helps change RBC volume in response to deformation (153). It is also expressed in the bladder, colon, lung and skin (154).

Table 33. Antigens in the Er system (155)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
Er ^a	1	2022	>99%	Unlikely
Er ^b	2	2022	<1%	Unknown
Er3	3	2022	>99%	Probable HTR
ERSA	4	2022	>99%	Severe HDFN
ERAMA	5	2022	>99%	Severe HDFN

All antigens in the Er blood group system are the result of a SNP in *PIEZO1*, except for Er3, whose loss is associated with the very rare Er(a-b-) phenotype. Er^a and Er^b are antithetical antigens.

In vitro tests suggest that anti-Er^a is unlikely to be clinically significant, and a small number of incompatible transfusions have been reported without complications. Results of in vitro tests performed to determine the clinical significance of anti-Er3 showed that incompatible RBCs were destroyed faster than normal, suggesting anti-Er3 may be capable of causing HTRs (156).

045 - CD36

The CD36 blood group system is encoded by *CD36*, which is found on 7q11.2 chromosome (156). The gene encodes a type B scavenger receptor with roles in cell signalling, fatty acid transport, and immune cell function (157). It is expressed in a range of immune and non-immune cells in the blood, including the endothelium (158).

Table 34. Antigens in the CD36 system (159)

Name	#	Year Described	Antigen frequency	Clinical significance
CD36.1	1	2023	Unknown	Possible HDFN

DISCUSSION

This report provides an update on what has been learnt about blood group antigens and systems over the last 20 years, and how their antibodies may affect patients in a clinical context. The results of this study had the potential to reveal limitations in our current ability to identify clinically significant antibodies and provide up to date information that will allow requirements of red cells used in red cell antibody screening to be reviewed.

The following blood group antigens produced antibodies that were either clinically significant or likely to be clinically significant: ENEV (MNS45), SARA (MNS47), P^k (P1PK3), CETW (RH63), VONG (KEL28), KEAL (KEL39), KHOZ (KEL41), DISK (DI22), YTGT (YT6), SCAN (SC7), SCAC (SC9), DOMR (DO7), GECT (GE13), INFI (IN3), PX2 (GLOB4), DSLK (RHAG3), Kg (RHAG5), THIN (RHAG7), Jr^a (JR1), Lan (LAN1), Vel (VEL1), At^a (AUG2), ATML (AUG3), ATAM (AUG4), Sd^a (SID1), MAM (MAM1), Emm (EMM1), Er3 (ER3), ERSA (ER4), ERAMA (ER5) and CD36.1.

There were some limitations in the information found during the literature search. Many antigens were only described in one study or abstract, and a few were only referenced by a secondary source. The coverage for each antigen varied; only a handful of studies gave a prediction of clinical significance, in some studies the quantity of antisera was limited, and therefore many studies were unable to estimate antigen or antibody frequency. The identification and classification of antigens is transitioning to molecular sequencing.

Future research could investigate antigen or allele frequencies in different populations as resources permit, as this can help us determine whether their antibodies are likely to appear more frequently. It could also focus on determining the clinical significance of antibodies, using such tests as the monocyte monolayer assay.

CONCLUSION

Blood group systems show a high degree of polymorphism in a large and heterogeneous human population and new variants appear on a continuous basis. Corresponding antibodies can have real-world consequences in transfusion, pregnancy and autoimmunity. This report described 122 blood group antigens and 17 blood group systems that were elucidated in the last 20 years.

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