

Simulated ABO/Rh Blood-Typing Activities

Why is it important that your blood type be known?

Introduction

Blood typing involves identifying substances called antigens present on red blood cells (RBC) membranes. Many different antibodies exist on human RBCs but those of clinical importance include only the ABO and Rh groups.

A person normally produces antibodies against those antigens not present on their RBCs but does not produce antibodies against those that are present. Thus, a person with antigen A has anti-B antibodies, etc. In the United States, 45% of the population is type O, 39% is type A, 12% is type B, and 4% is type AB.

Blood type is determined by multiple alleles I^A , I^B and i . I^A and I^B are co-dominant and both are dominant over i . Genotypes $I^A I^A$ and $I^A i$ result in blood type A. Genotypes $I^B I^B$ and $I^B i$ result in blood type B. When both I^A and I^B are present, the blood type is AB. When both alleles are i , the blood type is O.

Table 1 ABO System

Blood Type	Antigens on Erythrocytes	Antibodies in Plasma	Can Receive Blood from Groups:	Can Give Blood to Groups:
A	A	B	O,A	A,AB
B	B	A	O,B	B,AB
AB	A and B	None	O,A,B,AB	AB
O	None	A and B	O	O,A,B,AB

Blood typing is performed with antiserum-blood serum that contains specific antibodies. For ABO blood typing, antibodies against A and B antigen (these antibodies are also called anti-A and anti-B antibodies) are used. If clumping or clotting occurs in the test blood upon exposure to the A antibodies (anti-A serum), the blood contains the A antigen. If clumping occurs in the test blood upon exposure to the B antibodies (anti-B serum), the blood contains the B antigen. If clotting occurs with both A and B antibodies (anti-A and anti-B sera), the type is AB, and if no clumping occurs with either serum type, the type is O.

Table 2 Agglutination Reactions of ABO Blood-Typing Sera

Reaction		Blood Type
A antibodies (anti-A serum)	B antibodies (anti-B serum)	
clumping	no clumping	Type A
no clumping	clumping	Type B
clumping	clumping	Type AB
no clumping	no clumping	Type O

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