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Reply

Fernandes and Donovan have performed statistical analysis on the entire cohort to provide evidence for success of the therapy. Statistical analysis of our data had shown similar significant results. The 'hard core' clinical evidence was convincing but the small sample size reminded us of the adage that all statistically significant results might not be clinically significant. It is heartening to know that Fernandes and Donovan have endorsed our 'clinically significant' observations, as statistically significant as well.

Fernandes and Donovan have applied Pearson's correlation to demonstrate that response is related to the duration of wheat grass juice therapy. This would have been done by comparing interval between blood transfusion and the total amount of the blood transfused among patients with wheat grass

juice for varying periods. In an extension of this analysis, a further recourse can be to compare annual requirement of blood in an individual patient on wheat grass juice, and to look for evidence of increasing benefit as the duration of consumption increases. This would be more meaningful, than the comparison of benefit between different patients. We had not provided yearly data on each patient and instead given mean values of the entire duration of the pre and post wheat grass juice therapy period. This would have precluded the critics from performing temporal statistics in each patient. One must, however, remember that bias is likely to creep in with a large number of treatment defaulters. The patients who benefited initially are more likely to be compliant in the long run.

The hypothesis that an anti-oxidant mechanism may be responsible for the beneficial effects of wheat grass juice therapy is worthy of further evaluation. Augmented antioxidant capacity of red cells may be true not only for newly formed cells, but for the transfused red cells as well.

Most of our thalassemics, consuming wheat grass juice, reported non-specific well-being, improved appetite and reduced musculo-skeletal aches and pains. These effects may be attributed to the antioxidant activity of wheat grass juice.

**R.K. Marwaha,
Deepak Bansal,**

*Division of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology,
Advanced Pediatric Center,
PGIMER, Chandigarh 160 012, India.
E-mail: rammarwaha1@rediffmail.com*