

Ramallah, Palestine

10-17 May 2026

Confirmatory mission for the start-up of the first Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant Unit Istishari Arab Hospital

Participants:

Angelo Palmas: Adult HSCT

Marta Verna: Pediatric HSCT

Marco Possenti: Lab Technician

Francesco Ipsevich: Apheresis

Laura Russo: Registered Nurse

Tiziano Blasi: Head program of Soleterre NGO

BMT ward visit:

- 1) **Renovations:** All the renovation work has been completed. The only tasks remaining are to fit the furniture – which must be washable and fitted with castors – and to equip the ward with standard medical instruments. Please note that some areas of the ceiling need to be sealed.
- 2) **Check list:** please find attached the updated file. We underline that the majority of items has already been purchased but is in the border waiting for permission to enter in West Bank; we report here only items still not ordered:

- HARVEST NEEDLES
- PERISTALTIC PUMP FOR BLOOD PRODUCTS
- FILTERS 0.2 micron for rATG infusion
- BAG STAND for bone marrow bag in the surgical room
- pressure positive valve for catheter
- pediatric C-PAP mask
- CYCLOSPORINE IV AND ORAL SUSPENSION
- MYCOPHENOLATE IV AND ORAL SUSPENSION

Creation of the apheresis service/manipulation lab and cryopreservation facility:

- All the renovation work has been completed. Please note that some areas of the ceiling need to be sealed.
- For equipment: see checklist

Blood Bank

Implementation:

- Irradiation of blood products: a box to irradiate with the radiotherapy service has been ordered
- Apheresis machine to produce platelet from donors has been ordered
- Filtration of blood products after donation and not at bedside has to be implemented

Quality and Infection Control

No major issues identified

Laboratory

Implementation: for all these tests training has been done, waiting for instruments to start the activity

- Flow cytometry technique for hematological disease diagnosis and CD34 count
- Minimal Residual Disease by flow cytometry
- HLA typing with Luminex
- HLA antibodies with Luminex
- Chimerism
- PCR quantitative for CMV, EBV and Adenovirus
- Cyclosporine level

Staff

The responsibility tree has to be completed, in particular it is mandatory to nominate the BMT Program Director and a clinician expert in hematology and BMT as the medical director of the Apheresis, Manipulation and Cryopreservation service.

Patient recruitment

- The Hospital should start to accept all new hematological cases starting from June 2026; chemotherapy should be present without shortage for all patients
- Is essential to create a referral system from other hospitals

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- A collaboration with all centers treating thalassemia is strongly recommended in order to start transplant activity from this low risk category of patients (actually approximately 150 pediatric patients are present in West Bank)

First National Congress on hematopoietic stem cell transplantation

A 3 day congress has been conducted with a high level of participation and fruitful discussions.

Conclusions

The overall outcome of the mission was very positive. The project has been confirmed as feasible and sustainable, provided that the following priorities are met:

- a regular supply of chemotherapy drugs for haematology patients
- the arrival of all outstanding equipment by the end of June
- the completion of the responsibility tree within the next fortnight

Over the coming months, each working group is responsible for finalising all the key SOPs. Local doctors should begin selecting patients eligible for transplantation; in particular, it is recommended that they prepare at least two patients with multiple myeloma and two with low-risk thalassaemia.

Only once the hospital is fully equipped will we proceed with planning the next missions, which are scheduled to run for two months from October 2026, with the aim of performing the first autologous transplant in an adult patient with multiple myeloma and the first allogeneic transplant in a paediatric patient with thalassaemia.

On behalf of the Italian Expert Team

The Scientific Responsible

Dr.Marta Verna

