Transfusion therapy: Management

Highlights:

There is excellent clinical trial evidence that suggests that a restrictive policy of transfusion at a hemoglobin (Hgb) concentration of 7 to 8 g/dL should guide transfusion decisions in most patients. The use of transfusion thresholds that restrict transfusion to this Hgb concentration are safe in most patient populations, may improve clinical outcomes, and will reduce unnecessary transfusion.

Condition	Hgb Threshold for transfusion
Symptomatic patient (ischemia, tachycardia)	10 g/dL
Preexisting coronary artery disease	8 g/dL
Acute coronary syndromes	8-10 g/dL
Heart failure	7-8 g/dL
ICU stable	7 g/dL
GI bleeding stable	7 g/dL
Non-cardiac surgery	8 g/dL
Cardiac surgery	7-8 g/dL
Oncology patient in treatment	7-8 g/dL
Palliative care	As needed for symptoms
Trauma patient with ongoing bleeding	No Hgb value- Rx as required by clinical situation

Hospital-wide patient blood management programs may be helpful in guiding transfusion practices and reducing unnecessary transfusions, but they should not supersede clinical judgment

Question:

Which of the following situations requires blood transfusion?

a. 22 year-old trauma patient with ongoing bleeding
b. 68 year-old asymptomatic male with history of coronary artery disease and Hgb of 8 g/dL
c. 30 year-old female after vaginal delivery and estimated blood loss of 800 mL
d. A cardiac surgery patient with Hgb of 8 g/dL

Answer – A is the only clear choice