



life IS THE REASON

New Blood Buddies

How does donating with a friend impact the donation experience and retention of first-time donors?

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BACKGROUND

Blood Donation as a 'Social' Activity



SOCIAL INFLUENCE

- Encouragement from friends and family to donate blood is a common motivation (Sojka & Sojka, 2008; Yuan et al., 2011)
- Knowing others who donate blood positively influences donation intentions and behaviour (Robinson et al., 2008; Xie et al., 2019; Bruhun et al., 2020; Schröder et al., 2023)



SOCIAL SUPPORT

Donating blood with others can:

- Increase awareness of donation
- Provide social support and encouragement
- Improve social relationships

(Hanson & France, 2009; Jaafar et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2011)



BUDDY DONATION SYSTEMS

- Early career blood donors benefit from building social capital through community connections, which supports repeat donation (Alessandrini et al., 2007; Frye et al., 2018)
- **While donating with a friend is often recommended, the strategy has not been evaluated in field.** (Royse, 1999; Sojka & Sojka, 2008; Boenigk et al., 2015)

BACKGROUND

Donate with a Friend (DwF) Appointment Booking Process

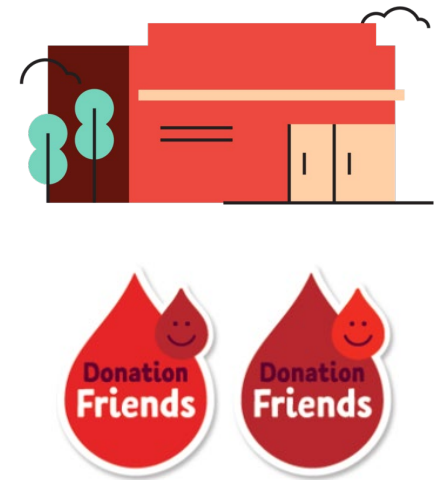


'Friend' could refer to a friend, family member, colleague or other social acquaintance.

The image displays four sequential screenshots of a mobile application interface for booking a blood donation appointment with a friend.

- Booking details:** Shows the location as 'Bundoora Blood Donor Centre' with a 'CHANGE LOCATION' button. Under 'Donation type', 'Blood' is selected. Under 'Booking type', 'With a friend' is selected. Links for 'What is the difference?' and 'Want to donate in a bigger group?' are present.
- Choose a friend:** Displays a list of friends: Chris Coates, Niamh Archer, and Ishaq Pierce. An 'Edit list' button is at the top right. A red button at the bottom says 'Choose a date and time'.
- Select date:** Shows a calendar for March and April 2022. A date is selected on the 10th of March.
- Steve:** Shows a confirmation screen for 'Steve' with the message 'Thanks for making a difference'. It displays 'Your next appointment is in 22 days on: Saturday 16th December'. It also shows 'This booking is with Chris Coates' and 'Pending eligibility: Chris has until 10/10/2022 to confirm their eligibility and complete the booking.' At the bottom, it shows 'A+' for blood type and '5' for total donations.

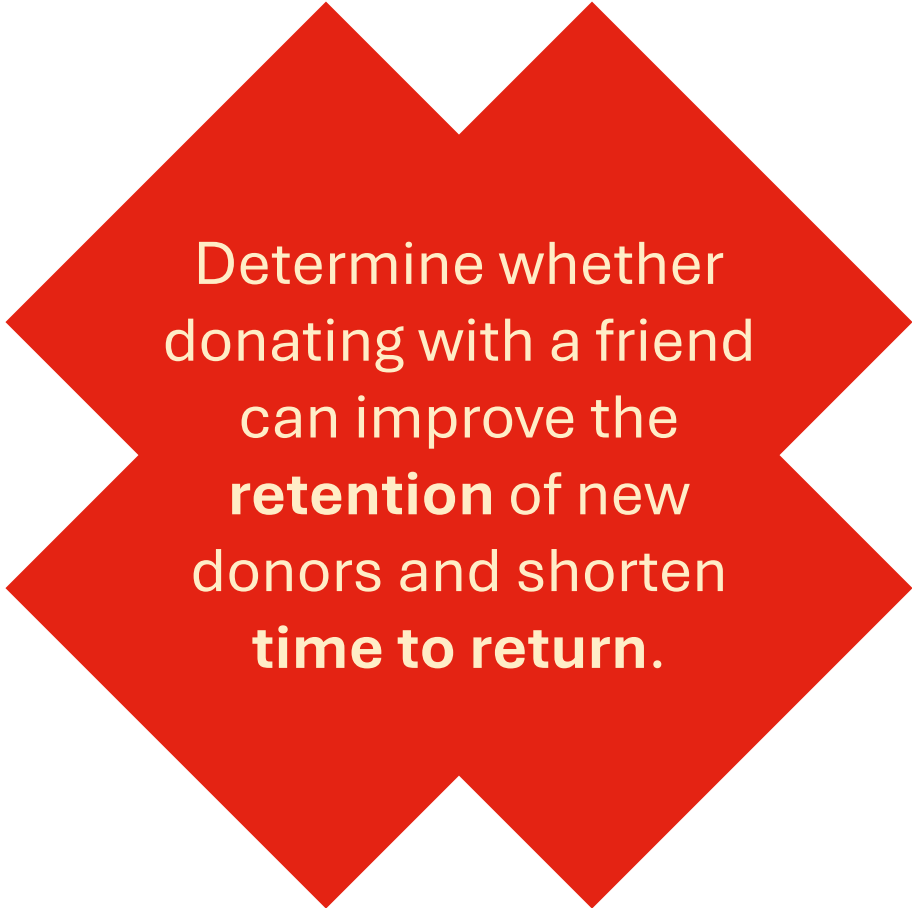
In-Centre



Donors could create a friends list on the app by sharing a personalised invite link (had to have at least registered to donate)

Appointments had to be the same type (whole blood or plasma) at the same time (this restricted available 'friend' appointment options).

RESEARCH AIMS

A red diamond shape with a white border, containing text about research aims.

Determine whether donating with a friend can improve the **retention** of new donors and shorten **time to return**.

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Understand the **donation experience** of new donors when donating with a friend

METHOD



Donate with Friends launched 20/02/2023

Evaluation period: 20/02/2023 → 20/02/2024

Retrospective Cohort Study (Aim 1)

- Identified all new donors who donated for the first time during the evaluation period and donated with a friend at least once (DwF Donors n=3,674).
- Randomly selected control group (n=3,674), who also donated for the first time during the evaluation period, and matched on age and gender of DwF Donors
- Narrowed scope to include only those who first donated in the first six months of the evaluation period (20/02/23 to 19/08/23) to investigate retention behaviour (see Table)**

Online Feedback Survey (Aim 2)

- All new donors who donated with a friend at least once within six months of the Donate with Friends launch were invited to participate in a 10-minute survey

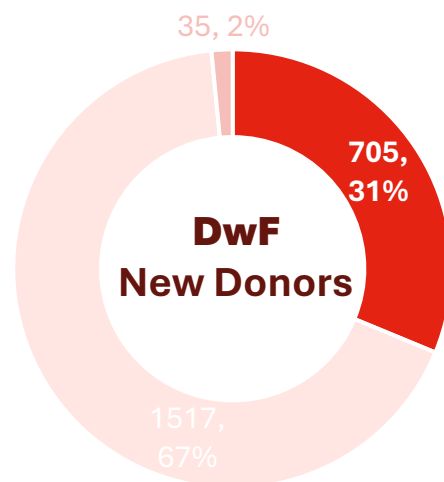
	DwF Donors (n=2,257, 61.4%)	Control Donors (n=3,655, 99.5%)
First Donation Date	Between 20/02/2023 and 19/08/2023	
Age		
Mean (SD)	17-72	17-77
Range	31.8 (13.3)	31.2 (11.9)
<30	1281 (56.8%)	2009 (55.0%)
30-49	634 (28.0%)	1290 (35.3%)
≥50	342 (15.2%)	356 (9.7%)
Gender		
Male	1027 (45.5%)	1693 (46.3%)
Female	1230 (54.5%)	1962 (53.7%)
Invite Status		
Inviter	607 (26.9%)	N/A
Invitee	1171 (51.9%)	
Inviter+Invitee	479 (21.2%)	
First Donation Type		
Friend	705 (31.2%)	-
Individual	1517 (67.2%)	3351 (91.7%)
Group	35 (1.6%)	304 (8.3%)

RESULTS

Donating with a friend does not increase retention rates



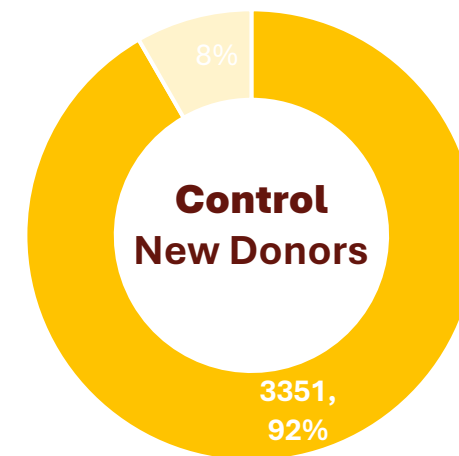
- DwF new donors mostly donated for the first time individually
- DwF new donors returned for a second donation at statistically similar rates to the control group ($p=.548$)
- 8.7% ($n = 61$) of DwF donors and 8.5% ($n = 312$) controls went on to become frequent donors (i.e., donated five or more times during 12-month evaluation period).



■ With friend ■ Individually ■ In group



■ Returned ■ Did not return



■ Individually ■ In group



■ Returned ■ Did not return

RESULTS



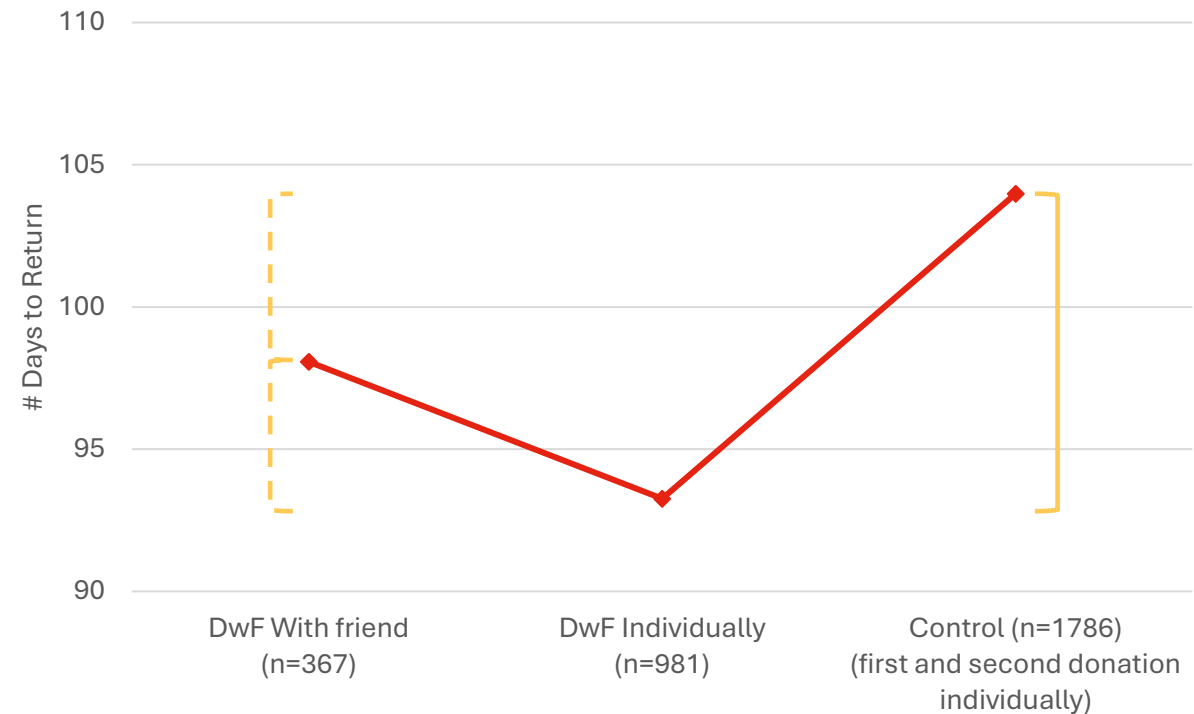
New donors whose **SECOND** donation was with a friend returned sooner

Among those who returned to donate, we considered time to return (# days)...

- Those who **first donated individually** but returned for a second collection with a friend, **returned sooner** (M = 93.3 days, SD = 61.9) than controls (M = 104.0 days, SD = 67.7; $p < .001$).
- Those who **first donated with a friend** **returned sooner** (M = 98.1 days, SD = 65.5) than controls, but it was not considered statistically significantly different ($p > .115$).

Donating with a friend might provide a novel reason to return more quickly.

Average time to return (days) for DwF new donors who first donated with a friend or individually.



Note: Dashed gold differences are not significant. Solid gold line difference is significantly different ($p < .001$).

SURVEY RESULTS

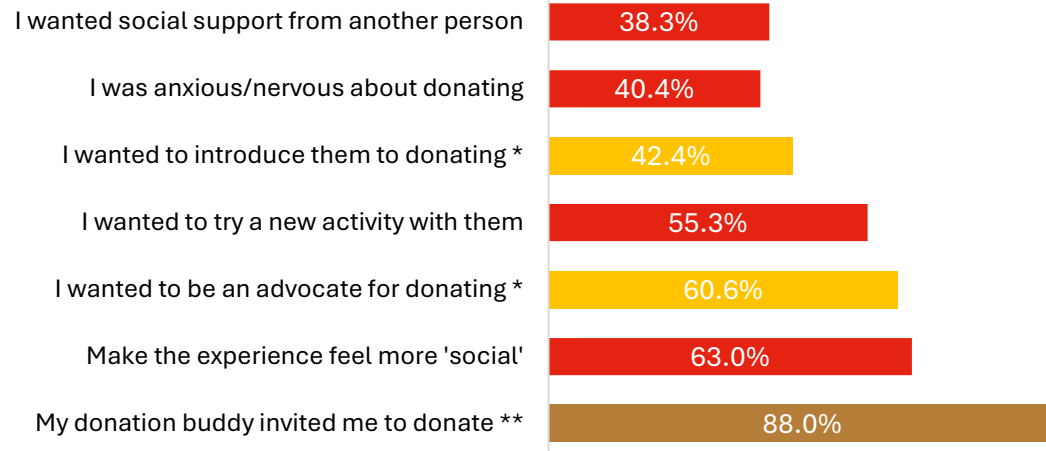
Donors wanted a social experience, more than support.

63%

To make the donation
experience more social

55%

To try a new activity with
their donation buddy



Note: Yes/No response scale. * Inviters only (n=34); ** Invitees only (n=28). All others n=49.



“It’s more fun to go with a friend.”

SURVEY RESULTS

80%

Felt more supported

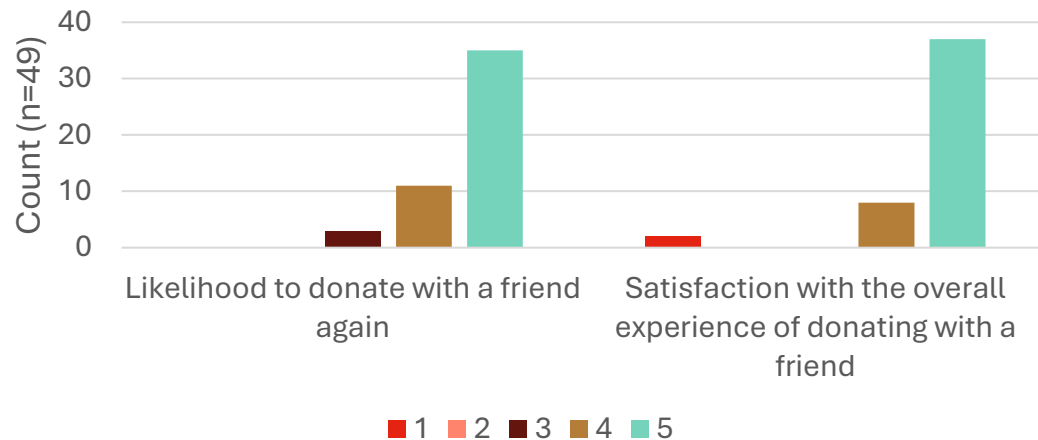
88%

Felt more committed

71%

Felt less nervous

Note: 5-point response scale, 1-2 = Less, 3 = No difference, 4-5 = More



Note: 5-point response scale, 1 = Very unlikely/Unsatisfied to 5 = Very Likely/ Satisfied



“I was nervous to start with and that's why she came to support me but now I am comfortable on my own, we might still go together on occasion.”

CONCLUSION

- Donating with a friend improves the social aspects of the donation experience
- Although donating with a friend as a first donation experience did not improve retention rates of new donors, donating individually first and returning for a friend appointment resulted in the shortest time to return.

The novelty and social aspects of donating with a friend should be promoted to first-time donors to improve repeat donation.

Thank you

Let's Connect!

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