

Should we pay people for donating blood?

By Padraig Belton Business reporter
15 November 2018

Scotty Hearn says he was a "broke college student" the first time he got paid for donating some of his blood plasma.

This was a few years ago when he was at university in Oregon.

Having plasma extracted eight times over a four-week period (the maximum allowed in the US) he could earn \$280 (£216) every month.

Now a 23-year-old high school teacher, he says "it was nice to get a bit of cash"

In countries such as the UK, where blood donation is entirely voluntary and unpaid, paying for it might seem distasteful or exploitative.

But in nations such as the US, Germany, Austria, and certain provinces of Canada, people do indeed get remunerated for giving blood, and business is booming.

Such is the growing demand for plasma, that **the global market - worth \$23.6bn in 2016 - is predicted to almost double to \$44.3bn by 2023.**

The US, the world's largest exporter, now sends more than \$2bn worth of plasma and related blood products overseas every month, **making it the country's 12th most valuable export.**

But is it ethical to pay people for their blood?

Mario Macis, an economist at Johns Hopkins University, says that altruistic donation isn't enough to meet the world's growing need for plasma .

Other people and organisations are very much against paying people to donate blood plasma, or other blood items.

One such individual is Kat Lanteigne, executive director of Toronto-based Blood Watch.

She says that paying for plasma "preys on vulnerable populations", and harms voluntary blood donation.

Adapted from BBC News