Von Willebrand Disease

Other names that may be used for this condition are:
- Angiohemophilia
- Constitutional Thrombopathy
- Minot-Von Willebrand Disease
- Pseudohaemophilia
- Vascular Haemophilia
- Von Willebrand Factor Deficiency
- VWD
- Willebrand-Juergans Disease

Von Willebrand Disease (VWD) is a genetic disorder, which affects the blood's ability to clot properly. It is characterized mainly by prolonged bleeding and vulnerability to bruising. All types of Von Willebrand Disease are caused by problems in the Von Willebrand Factor (VWF) protein. The main function of VWF is to support the blood's platelets, which therefore cannot function properly in VWD. The VWF protein is also helps to protect the blood clotting factor FVIII. The location of VWF is on the short arm of chromosome 12.

Von Willebrand Disease can be diagnosed through clinical tests on VWF levels and monitoring of the bleeding time, these tests may need to be repeated due to changes in the levels of substances in the blood. Treatment of type 1 of this disorder includes Desmopressin, a synthetic drug which is a copy of a hormone. Cyklokapron and Amikar, are other useful drugs that help hold a clot in place once it has formed. Other treatments include a Factor VIII Concentrate which contains Von Willebrand Factor, this is used for Type 3, serious bleeding or major surgery, and occasionally some cases of type 2. Also, Cryoprecipitate is a blood component that controls excess bleeding. Dosages must be monitored to avoid any other complications, activities which carry a high risk of injury should be avoided and it is recommended that those affected should have a precautionary immunisation against Hepatitis B.

This information is fully sourced and referenced, for more detailed information and references please contact CLIMB by email, letter or telephone.

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