Common Childhood Benign Blood Disorders

The causes of blood disorders in childhood can either be inherited or acquired. Fortunately, many of these disorders can be effectively managed or cured currently, according to the information provided by the Department of Paediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, HKU LKS Faculty of Medicine.

Idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura or *ITP* is an acquired condition due to abnormal production of "auto-antibody" thereby destroying one's own platelet. Patients will have low platelet count and bleeding tendency, mainly in the form of easy bruising and frequent nose or gum bleeding. 80 to 85% of childhood acute ITP will recover within 6 months.

Glucose 6 phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency or "*favism*" is a x-recessive inherited disorder of the red cells. Children with this disorder cannot tolerate oxidative substances such as sulfa drugs, aspirin or fava beans for they can induce break down of the red cells leading to severe anaemia.

Haemophilia A or *B* is another X-recessive inherited disorders with deficiency of clotting factors VIII or IX respectively. Patients have easy bleeding in the joints or muscles. Replacement of these clotting factors can help to control bleeding.

Thalassaemia is an autosomal recessive inherited disease. Around 8.5% of the populations in Hong Kong carry the abnormal genes. Affected patients fail to produce normal haemoglobin inside the red cells and they breakdown easily. In severe cases, patients require regular blood transfusion and frequent iron chelation therapy to sustain life.