‘Golden blood’ is incredibly important to medicine — but for the 43 people worldwide known to have it, it poses a unique danger

Golden blood is actually the nickname for Rh-null, the world’s rarest blood type.

As Mosaic reported, the type is so rare that only about 43 people have been reported to have it worldwide, and until 1961, when it was first identified in an Aboriginal Australian woman, doctors assumed embryos with Rh-null blood would simply die in utero.

But what makes Rh-null so rare, and why is it so dangerous to live with?

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Blood is considered Rh-null if it lacks all of the 61 possible antigens in the Rh system. This not only makes it rare, but this also means it can be accepted by anyone with a rare blood type within the Rh system.

This is why it is considered “golden blood.” It is worth its weight in gold.

As Mosaic reported, golden blood is incredibly important to medicine, but also very dangerous to live with. If a Rh-null carrier needs a blood transfusion, they can find it difficult to locate a donor, and blood is notoriously difficult to transport internationally. Rh-null carriers are encouraged to donate blood as insurance for themselves, but with so few donors spread out over the world and limits on how often they can donate.

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.