The Lutheran blood group system (BGS) consists of a large number of antigens, 24 being recognised by the International Society of Blood Transfusion at the time of writing, and is also of interest in terms of the various backgrounds to the (apparent) Lu(a-b-) phenotypes. The Lutheran BCS is also incorrectly named, as will be explained shortly.

There are four antithetical pairs of antigens within the BCS, but certain antigens (for example, Lu5) appear to be missing. This is the result of so-called para-Lutheran antigens, reported as possibly belonging to the Lutheran BCS but later proved to belong elsewhere.

Most of the Lutheran BCS antigens are high prevalence, with Lu4, Lu5 and Lu1 being polymorphic and only Lu19 and Lu24 being low prevalence.

Lutheran antigens and antibodies tend to result in agglutination that gives a characteristic loose agglutination, with many unagglutinated red cells. An expert delves into the history and science of a notable blood group system.

THE LUTHERAN BLOOD GROUP SYSTEM

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