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**Information about the contributions of each person named as having participated in the study**

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**2) Authors who participated in the conception of the study:** Paola Bianchi, Alberto Zanella, Elisa Fermo

- 3) Design & Methods.** The following authors were responsible for specific investigations
- Cristina Vercellati was responsible for osmotic fragility tests and red cell membrane analysis
  - Anna P Marcello was responsible for laboratory investigations and osmotic fragility tests
  - Laura Porretti was responsible for flow cytometric analysis
  - Wilma Barcellini was responsible for patients recruitment and follow up.

**4) Results.** The following authors were responsible for specific portions of the results, including figures and tables:

- Paola Bianchi and Elisa Fermo were responsible for Results including all Figures and Tables.

**5) Writing the manuscript.** The following authors were responsible for writing the manuscript:

- Paola Bianchi and Elisa Fermo were responsible for writing the manuscript.
- Alberto Zanella, Wilma Barcellini and Agostino Cortelezzi were responsible for critical revision of the manuscript.

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