

MAJOR INCONSISTENCIES IN ASSESSING DONOR CHARACTERISTICS FOR ORGAN ACCEPTANCE IN PANCREAS TRANSPLANTATION

Background: The majority of pancreata, offered in allocation, are discarded. This pancreas under-utilization is not well understood yet. We aimed to analyse whether consistent turndown criteria can be identified.

Methods: We analysed the allocation protocols of all Eurotransplant-registered German whole pancreas donors in 2005-2009 (n=1769). Several reasons were categorized according to their relevance for rejecting or accepting the organ for transplantation. Donor-related characteristics, e.g. BMI, age and P-PASS, were compared between transplanted and rejected pancreata.

Results: 63% of the offered pancreata were not transplanted. The most frequent turndown reasons were 'long ICU stay', 'resuscitation', 'age' and 'lab results'. Those donors where 'long ICU stay' was named stayed longer on ICU than those whose pancreas was transplanted (10.8±5.1 vs. 3.5±3.4 days). However, there was a considerable overlap: Of 442 donors who stayed 4-7 days, the pancreata of 7% were rejected because of 'ICU stay' while 34% were transplanted (59% cases: rejected for other reasons). The pancreata of those who stayed on ICU 8-11 days were rejected due to 'ICU stay' in 29%, transplanted in 24%. Even a stay of 0-3 days was given as a discard reason in 12 cases, whereas 15 pancreata were transplanted whose donors stayed on ICU ≥12 days. Similar results were found for age and BMI. The P-PASS was lower in the used than in the rejected organs (mean/median 16 vs. 18), but the range was similar (9-24 vs. 9-25).

Discussion: There is no consistency in the decision-making process using the single donor characteristics (e.g. BMI, ICU stay, age) or the P-PASS. A better understanding of the organ rejection process is needed in order to facilitate the acceptance of pancreata used for transplantation. Prospective qualitative interviews are planned to investigate the relevance of non-medical reasons.

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Accepted as Oral Presentation on the 15th Scientific Congress of the European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT), Glasgow 2011