

Nephrology

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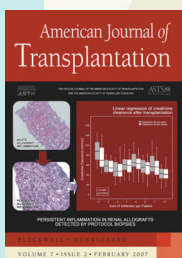
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Fairness of Kidney Allocation Could Shake Public Trust



The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) coordinates the nation's transplant system through a point system based primarily on wait time, sensitization and HLA matching. When a match occurs, the kidney is offered to the person at the top of the national list. A recent editorial in the *American Journal of Transplantation* discusses the fairness and equality in kidney allocation, particularly as UNOS is reevaluating its allocation system and will receive recommendations from a sub-committee this year.

“The issue of the allocation of deceased donor organs is not new, and there have been two somewhat conflicting philosophical approaches,” says author Ron Shapiro, M.D. The concern is that a new allocation policy could shake public trust in the system and could affect donations.

Read this editorial in the March issue of the *American Journal of Transplantation*. You can also review the Emory Algorithm from a five-year Emory University study which is being considered as part of a new kidney allocation system. Read the Emory study on www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajt

Routine Dialysis After Radiographic Procedures May Be Unnecessary



According to a new review in the latest issue of *Seminars in Dialysis*, doctors who use dialysis treatments in an attempt to remove contrast media, a common x-ray dye, after radiographic procedures, may be wasting time and resources. Though patients with chronic kidney disease are susceptible to further kidney damage from x-ray contrast, recent studies have failed to show a benefit from dialysis.

This study published in the January - February 2007 issue of *Seminars in Dialysis*.

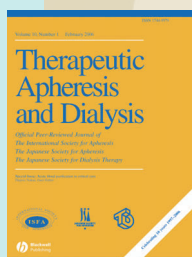
Are Your Kidneys Okay?



Although largely an ‘invisible’ killer, experts want the public to know that kidney disease is common, harmful and treatable. A paper published in the February 2007 issue of *Nephrology* entitled ‘Diabetic nephropathy without the diabetes: If not hyperglycaemia, then what?’, highlights the urgent need for a deeper understanding of the molecular mediators of the disease, as current treatments are only partially effective. Authored by Associate Professor Robyn Langham, Director of Nephrology at Melbourne’s St. Vincent’s Hospital, the paper draws attention to the fact that diabetic nephropathy is the major cause of chronic kidney disease worldwide.

This paper published in *Nephrology*, February 2007.

The Effect of Patient Age and Other Factors on the Maintenance of Permanent Hemodialysis Vascular Access



The objective of this study was to investigate whether patient age is associated with vascular access failure during maintenance hemodialysis. Researchers concluded that the data shows that age is a risk factor for the successful maintenance of initial permanent hemodialysis vascular access. Other risk factors include gender and diabetes mellitus. However, these factors were not related to the successful maintenance of revised vascular access.

This article published in the February 2007 issue of *Therapeutic Apheresis and Dialysis*.



Teens May Lose Transplanted Organs When Insurance Runs Out

A new study shows that young transplant patients in the U.S. who lose their insurance coverage are more likely to stop taking necessary anti-rejection drugs, which can increase the risk of losing the transplanted organs. “Immunosuppressive drugs that prevent organ rejection are incredibly expensive; the cost can exceed \$13,000 a year,” says study author Dr. Mark Schnitzler. “This represents a significant financial burden for families no matter if they have adequate health insurance coverage because of co-payment obligations.”

This study published in the March 2007 issue of *Pediatric Transplantation*.



Dialysis Patients with Metabolic Syndrome Show Increased Risk for Heart Disease

A study of kidney dialysis patients found that almost 70 percent had metabolic syndrome, a set of symptoms that is a predictor of cardiovascular disease, at the time they initiated maintenance dialysis. This information further illuminates the relationship between heart and kidney disease, as dialysis patients are already known to have an elevated risk of cardiovascular problems. The study also showed that white, female and diabetic dialysis patients showed the highest incidence of metabolic syndrome.

This study published in the January 2007 issue of *Hemodialysis International*.



Obese kidney transplant patients are twice as likely to die in the first year or suffer organ failure

Survival and successful kidney transplant rates are significantly lower when people are obese, according to a study of over 2,000 patients published in the November issue of *Transplant International*. A team of experts from across the Netherlands studied the medical profiles of 4,245 adults who had received kidney transplants, using data from the Netherlands Organ Transplantation Registry.

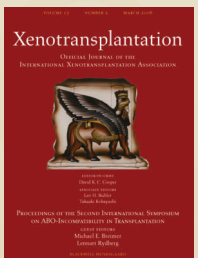
This study published in *Transplant International*, November 2006.



Steroid-free Medication Lowers Rejection Rate for Kidney Transplants

Kidney transplant recipients are typically required to take daily steroids as part of their anti-rejection medications. However, long-term steroid use has significant side effects. A new study in *Clinical Transplantation* explored a combination of steroid-free medications that resulted in excellent patient outcomes and a very low rejection rate. A review of 301 patients that were given steroid-free medications at the Ohio State University Medical Center found that only 4.9 percent experienced rejection. In a second review, studying 502 patients who received typical, steroidal medications at the same institution, the rejection rate rose to 9.4 percent.

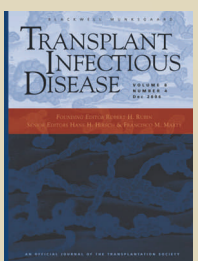
This study published in *Clinical Transplantation*, September/October 2006.



Pig Cell Implants Show Potential for Treatment of Stroke, Huntington's Disease

A review of accumulated evidence on the use of porcine brain choroid plexus (CP) cells published in the July issue of *Xenotransplantation* highlights that these cells have the potential to treat acute and chronic brain disease. Successful results of past CP transplants in small animals and primates point to the possibility for treatment of human neurological diseases in the near future. “This research indicates that animal cells may be a viable, safe and effective means of treating serious human brain diseases. It is another example of how xenotransplantation can avoid the severe shortage of human organs and cells,” states lead author of the review, Dr. Stephen J.M. Skinner of Living Cell Technologies, Ltd. in Auckland, New Zealand.

This article published in *Xenotransplantation*, July 2006.



Polyomavirus-associated nephropathy: update of clinical management in kidney transplant patients

Over the last decade, polyomavirus-associated nephropathy (PVAN) has occurred with increasing frequency after renal transplantation, leading to significant renal dysfunction and graft loss. No antiviral treatments for PVAN have been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration. The antiviral drug cidofovir has shown in vitro activity against murine polyomaviruses, and has been used in some patients in lower doses in an effort to minimize the nephrotoxic effects of cidofovir while treating PVAN. Small series of PVAN patients treated with leflunomide, intravenous immune globulin therapy, and fluoroquinolones have also been reported recently.

This review article published in the June 2006 issue of *Transplant Infectious Disease*.

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