
Innovative Model Shows that Long-term Kidney Graft Protection is also Highly Cost Effective

PRAGUE, October 2 --Management strategies which provide optimal long-term protection to already transplanted kidneys are highly cost effective and can help patients avoid the need for dialysis or re-transplantation, according to an innovative, new transplant healthcare model presented for the first time today at the 13th Congress of the European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT), Prague, Czech Republic.

The transplant team at University Hospital Birmingham analysed 15,229 kidney transplant patients from the UK Transplant database and registry of outcome over a 10 year period in order to examine the effects of a sustained year on year improvement in the proportion of kidney transplants working. They studied the impact of this trend on dialysis and kidney transplant requirements and assessed the cost effect of this improvement.

The UK researchers who developed the model analysed ten year data from more than 15,000 kidney transplant recipients, and found a significant correlation between long-term graft survival and the need for "rescue" dialysis or re-transplantation.

In the UK the 10 year survival of kidneys transplanted into patients between 1985 and 1995 increased from 53.1 % to 63.7%.

It costs substantially less to treat a patient with a functioning kidney transplant than a patient on dialysis. This improvement in outcomes has therefore led to a cumulative cost benefit. For example there was an overt cost saving for the UK of over 70 million euro/yr in 1995 based on the improvement in kidney transplant outcomes in the 10 years from 1985. If secondary cost-effects are included total cost savings may have been in excess of 125 million euro/yr. The researchers suggest that these results could be generalised to other European countries

If the data are generalised for Europe they show:

- over a ten year period, each 1 % improvement in graft survival reduces the number of European patients who require dialysis by 1,910
- over the same ten year period, each 1% improvement in graft survival reduces the number of European patients who require re-transplantation by 950
- when adjusted for current pricing, each 1% improvement in ten year graft survival leads to a cumulative pan-European cost saving of 149,760,230 euros per year

Dr Paul Cockwell, Consultant Nephrologist at Birmingham and lead investigator on the study commented: "These data show that by better preserving already transplanted kidneys we could make more organs available for patients awaiting their first transplant. The cost benefits of kidney transplantation are clear and transplant programmes must receive sufficient funding to continue to improve long-term outcomes. This will benefit patients and represents a great example of 'investing to save'."

Source: Dr Paul Cockwell

For more information, please contact: Maura Seldon, T: +44-7979-850-326

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