

NHS BLOOD AND TRANSPLANT
PANCREAS ADVISORY GROUP
PANCREAS FAST TRACK SCHEME

BACKGROUND

1. The Pancreas Fast Track Offering Scheme (FTS) was first introduced on 1 December 2010 with the new Pancreas Allocation Scheme and was initiated once the pancreas had been removed from the donor in order to place the donated organ as a matter of urgency. It was further agreed at the Advisory Group meeting in October 2015 that a revised fast track offering scheme would be introduced from 14 December 2015, which would be initiated either if the pancreas had been declined by 4 centres (3 centres for a donor after circulatory death) for donor or organ reasons or once the pancreas had been removed from the donor.
2. Following discussion of the large volume of fast track pancreas offers and low transplantation rate an in-depth analysis was presented at the Advisory Group meeting in November 2018. It was subsequently agreed not to fast track a pancreas if the cold ischaemic time (CIT) was greater than 8 hours at time of potential fast track. This rule took effect from 1 April 2019. No changes were made to the rules triggering fast track offers.
3. A further change was agreed at PAG in April 2020, to not fast track a pancreas to whole pancreas centres if the CIT was greater than 4 hours. This change was implemented on 1 October 2020.

INTRODUCTION

4. This paper audits activity in the 24 months since the introduction of the 8 hour CIT cut off rule on 1 April 2019 and includes 6-months following the further change implemented on 1 October 2020. Data were obtained from the UK Transplant Registry on both donors after brain death (DBD) and donors after circulatory death (DCD) pancreas donors aged less than 65 years. Data are presented for the full 2019/2020 financial year and in two 6-month periods for the 2020/2021 year. Data for 2018/19 are also shown for comparison.

RESULTS

5. **Table 1** shows the number of pancreas donors whose organs were offered through the fast track scheme in the 24 month time period. Of the 661 pancreas donors, 39% were offered through the scheme in the 24 month period a slight reduction compared with 43% in 2018/19. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic there was a change to the offering process so that pancreases were fast tracked after offering to Tier A patients, between April and September 2020. Also between October 2020 and March 2021 there were fewer donors than normal due to the second wave. Therefore, it will be important to monitor the scheme for a further year before making an assessment as to whether the proportion of donors being fast tracked has fallen as intended.
6. For DBD, the proportion of donors fast tracked in the 24 month period was 36%, a reduction from 44% in 2018/19. However, for DCD, the proportion of donors fast tracked has increased from 39% in 2018/19 to 49% in the 24 month period.

7. Overall in the 24 month period, of the 261 pancreas donors offered through the scheme, 96 (37%) were subsequently accepted for transplantation and 45 (17%) were transplanted. Of the 45 transplanted, 37 were transplanted as whole organs and eight as islets.
8. Since November 2017, ODT Hub Operations staff have been recording the trigger for the fast track offer. In the 24 month period April 2019 to March 2021, the main trigger specified for fast tracking 261 donors was "Declined after KTS" in 88 (34%) cases. In 41 (16%) cases the organ had been declined by 3 (DCD) or 4 (DBD) centres, in 41 (16%) cases the organ had not been accepted by knife to skin and in 38 (15%) cases the organ had been deemed unusable. In 26 (10%) cases the reason was due to the COVID-19 pandemic offering process deviation.
9. Follow-up information is available for some of those organs transplanted following fast track offer in the 2018/19 period. Of the 13 whole pancreas transplants, one was functioning at 3-months, five at one year and 7 at two years post-transplant. Of the eight islet transplants, six were routine and two were a priority top-up graft. Seven have follow-up and are known to be functioning, one at two months, five at one year and one at two years post transplant.
10. For those organs fast tracked in the recent 24 month period and transplanted, follow-up was available for 20 of the whole organ transplants: one graft had failed, 14 were functioning at 3-months and 5 at one year post-transplant. Of the eight islet transplants, five were routine and three were priority top-up grafts. Five have follow-up, four are known to be functioning, three at three months and one of the priority top-up grafts has failed.

ACTION

11. The most recent change has only been in place for 6 months and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of organs offered and the number of fast track offers have been affected in this time period. The fast track scheme will continue to be monitored.

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Table 1 Outcome of pancreases offered through the fast track scheme 2018/19, 2019/20, 1 April – 30 September 2020 and 1 October 2020 – 31 March 2021									
Year	Donor type	Number of pancreas donors	Number offered through FTS (% of donors)	Number accepted for transplantation through FTS			Number transplanted through FTS		
				Whole	Islet	Total	Whole	Islet	Total (% of offered)
2018/19	DBD	362	158 (44%)	27	16	43	10	7	17 (11%)
	DCD	104	41 (39%)	9	2	11	3	1	4 (10%)
	Total	466	199 (43%)	36	18	54	13	8	21 (11%)
2019/20	DBD	333	121 (36%)	21	13	34	10	6	16 (13%)
	DCD	118	58 (49%)	16	2	18	8	1	9 (16%)
	Total	451	179 (40%)	37	15	52	18	7	25 (14%)
2020/21 Apr - Sep	DBD	66	28 (42%)	17	4	21	8	1	9 (32%)
	DCD	18	10 (56%)	8	1	9	6	0	6 (60%)
	Total	84	38 (45%)	25	5	30	14	1	15 (39%)
2020/21 Oct - Mar	DBD	93	29 (31%)	6	4	10	3	0	3 (10%)
	DCD	33	15 (45%)	4	0	4	2	0	2 (13%)
	Total	126	44 (35%)	10	4	14	5	0	5 (11%)