

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 30 months since the introduction of the 8 hour CIT cut off rule on 1 April 2019. 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 2019/20, 2020/21 and the first six-months of 2021/22 together with data from 2018/19 for comparison. The data in 2020/21 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Between April and September 2020, there was a change to the offering process so that pancreases were fast tracked after offering to Tier A patients and between October 2020 and March 2021 there were fewer donors than normal due to the second wave of the pandemic.

RESULTS

5. Of the 830 pancreas donors, 39% were offered through the scheme in the 30 month period a slight reduction compared with 43% in 2018/19. **Table 1** shows the number of pancreas donors whose organs were offered through the fast track scheme by financial year in the 30 month time period.
6. The proportion of donors fast tracked in the latest six-month period was 36% of DBD, a reduction from 44% in 2018/19, and 39% of DCD, equivalent to that seen in 2018/19.
7. Overall in the 30 month period, of the 325 pancreas donors offered through the scheme, 115 (35%) were subsequently accepted for transplantation and 56 (17%) were transplanted. Of the 56 transplanted, 42 were transplanted as whole organs and 14 as islets.

8. In the 30 month period April 2019 to September 2021, the main trigger recorded by Hub Operations for fast tracking 325 donors was “Declined after KTS” in 117 (36%) cases. In 58 (18%) cases the organ had been declined by 3 (DCD) or 4 (DBD) centres, in 52 (16%) cases the organ had not been accepted by knife to skin and in 40 (12%) cases the organ had been deemed unusable. In 26 (8%) 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, three at one year and nine at two years post-transplant. Of the eight islet transplants, six were routine and two were a priority top-up graft. Five of the six routine have follow-up and are known to be functioning, one at two months, three at one year and one at two years post transplant.
10. For those organs fast tracked in the recent 30 month period and transplanted, follow-up was available for 33 of the 42 whole organ transplants: one graft had failed, 19 were functioning at 3-months and 13 at one year post-transplant. Of the 14 islet transplants, 10 were routine and four were priority top-up grafts. Two have follow-up, both are known to be functioning at six months.

ACTION

11. The most recent change has only been in place for 12 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. 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.

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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	DBD	159	58 (36%)	23	8	31	11	1	12 (21%)
	DCD	52	26 (50%)	13	1	14	8	0	8 (31%)
	Total	211	84 (40%)	36	9	45	19	1	20 (24%)
2021/22 Apr - Sep	DBD	127	46 (36%)	8	6	14	5	5	10 (22%)
	DCD	41	16 (39%)	3	1	4	0	1	1 (6%)
	Total	168	62 (37%)	11	7	18	5	6	11 (18%)