

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 2010 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 36 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 2021/22. Numbers for 2018/19 are also given in the results section for comparison purposes. 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. Also between October 2020 and March 2021 there were fewer donors than normal due to the second wave of the pandemic.

RESULTS

5. Of the 993 pancreas donors, 38% were offered through the scheme in the 36 month period, overall a 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 36 month time period.
6. The proportion of donors fast tracked in the latest 12-month period was 35% of DBD, a reduction from 44% in 2018/19, and 39% of DCD, equivalent to that seen in 2018/19.
7. Overall in the 36 month period, of the 382 pancreas donors offered through the scheme, 145 (38%) were subsequently accepted for transplantation and 70 (18%) were transplanted. Of the 70 transplanted, 55 were transplanted as whole organs and 15 as islets.

8. **Table 2** shows, for the 36 month period April 2019 to March 2022, the trigger recorded by Hub Operations for fast tracking 382 donors. The main reason was “Declined after KTS” in 136 (36%) cases. In 26 (7%) cases the reason was due to the COVID-19 pandemic offering process deviation.
9. For those organs fast tracked in the recent 36 month period and transplanted, follow-up was available for 41 of the 55 whole organ transplants: two grafts had failed, 13 were functioning at 3-months and 22 at one year post-transplant and four at two years post-transplant. Of the 15 islet transplants, 10 were routine and five were priority top-up grafts. Seven have follow-up, three of these grafts have failed, two before one year and one at two years post-transplant.

ACTION

10. The most recent change has only been in place for 18 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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Table 1 Outcome of pancreases offered through the fast track scheme in the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22									
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)
2019/20	DBD	332	120 (36%)	22	14	36	10	6	16 (13%)
	DCD	118	58 (49%)	16	2	18	8	1	9 (16%)
	Total	450	178 (40%)	38	16	54	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	DBD	240	84 (35%)	21	10	31	13	6	19 (23%)
	DCD	92	36 (39%)	14	1	15	5	1	6 (17%)
	Total	332	120 (36%)	35	11	46	18	7	25 (21%)

Table 2 Reasons for fast tracking in the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22

Reason	N	(%)
Declined after KTS	136	(36%)
Declined by 4 (DBD) /3 (DCD) centres for organ or donor reasons	72	(19%)
Not accepted by KTS	65	(17%)
Deemed unusable	45	(12%)
Declined post isolation	26	(7%)
Offering process deviation due to COVID-19	26	(7%)
RM authorisation/unstable donor	5	(1%)
No named recipients on matching run (BMI=>31 or low age, low BMI donor)	4	(1%)
Positive virology donor	3	(1%)
Total	382	