

NHS BLOOD AND TRANSPLANT

KIDNEY ADVISORY GROUP

ACCESS TO TRANSPLANT FOR LIVER AND KIDNEY PATIENTS – REVIEW OF REVISED ODT HUB OPERATIONS PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

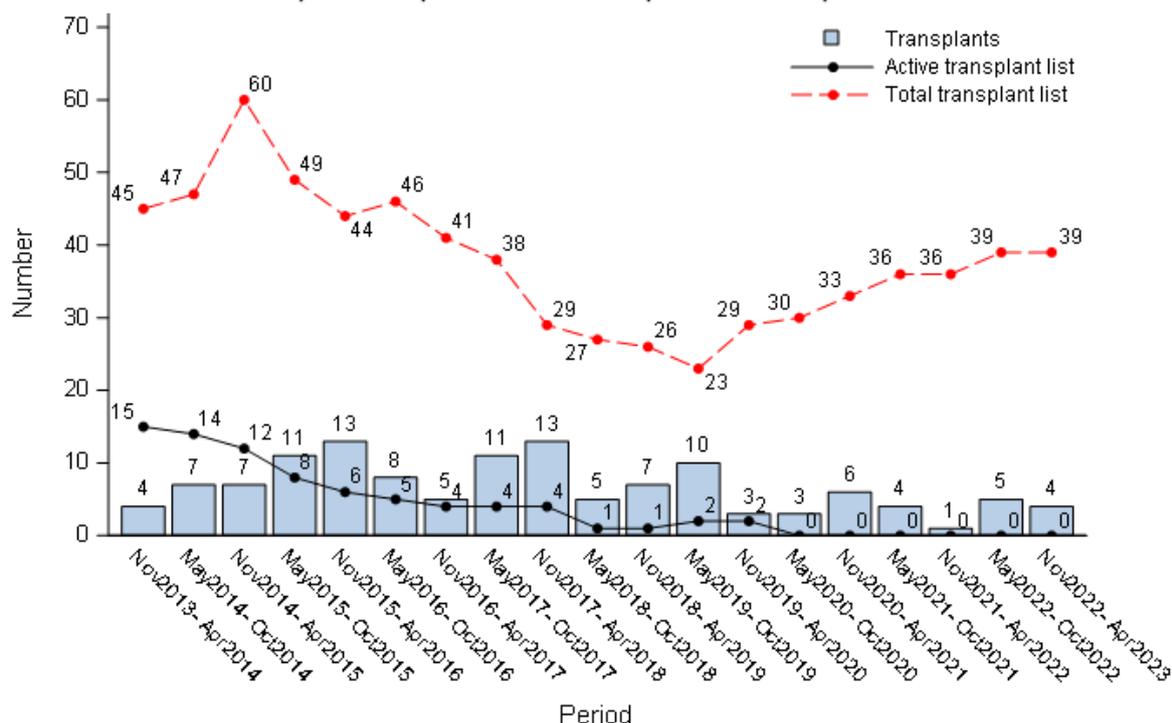
- 1 Following concerns raised about potential disadvantage for patients needing a combined liver/kidney transplant, the Liver Advisory Group (LAG) and Kidney Advisory Group (KAG) agreed a slight change in the ODT Hub Operations processes to more readily facilitate combined liver/kidney transplant. At February 2015, 52 patients were awaiting such a transplant with 10 (19%) having waited more than two years.
- 2 On 5 May 2015, a new process was implemented on a trial basis. ODT Hub Operations would delay offering one kidney from a donor after brain death (DBD) for up to 60 minutes during which time the liver zonal centre could declare whether they wished to accept a kidney to accompany the liver. This has allowed liver zonal centres to consider their liver and kidney patients with the knowledge that a kidney will be available to them if needed (rather than already be committed to a kidney patient).
- 3 On 20 March 2018, the National Liver Offering Scheme was introduced which has changed how kidneys are offered with the liver. For adult DBD donors, one kidney is reserved for liver patients only if one of the top three ranking recipients on the elective list require a kidney. The kidney will become available for kidney patients after 60 minutes, or once it has been declined for the liver/kidney patient. The offer is provisional and subject to there not being high priority patients on the National Kidney Waiting List (Tiers A-C under previous scheme and Tier A in the new offering scheme).
- 4 This report gives an overview of waiting list and transplant activity for liver and kidney patients, from 1 November 2013 to 30 April 2023. The impact on kidney patients is also examined for potential disadvantage.
- 5 Following a review, it was agreed at the May 2021 LAG that, subject to there not being high priority (Tier A) patients on the National Kidney Waiting List, a kidney from DCD donor should be reserved until the zonal and linked centres had declined the kidney. This change was implemented on 1 November 2021 and this paper also examines the DCD liver and kidney offering pathway for the first eighteen months.

LIVER/KIDNEY ACTIVITY

- 6 **Figure 1** shows the number of liver and kidney transplants in the period since 1 November 2013 along with waiting list activity. The number of transplants increased from November 2013 to April 2018 with a fall between May 2016 and April 2017. The number of transplants subsequently decreased before increasing between November 2018 and October 2019. The number of transplants then decreased and have remained low, ranging from 6 between November 2020 and April 2021, to 1 transplant between November 2021 – April 2022. There were 4 transplants in the most recent period (November 2022 and April 2023).

- 7 The number of patients actively awaiting a liver and kidney had fallen between April 2014 and April 2019. The number of patients actively waiting increased slightly before dropping to 0 patients in October 2020 and has remained at 0 to date (April 2023). Most patients transplanted since 1 May 2015 had a suspended kidney status at the time of transplant. Thus the total transplant list numbers are likely to be more indicative of the real need for liver/kidney transplantation.

Figure 1 Liver and kidney patient activity in the UK, 1 November 2013 - 30 April 2023
Number of transplants and patients on the transplant list at 30 April and 31 October



IMPACT FOR KIDNEY PATIENTS

DBD Offering Pathway

- 8 To assess the impact on kidney patients who may have missed out on a transplant as a result of a kidney being used for a liver/kidney patient, the kidney matching runs for the 9 liver/kidney transplants since 1 May 2022 were examined. Over this period, one high priority patient has been in two cases as the only high priority patient, and there has been one case with two other high priority patients.
- 9 The high priority patient in two cases was ranked first for both and received an offer for one of the two kidneys. Where the patient did not receive an offer, the donor was aged 70 and in donor risk category D4 so the kidney was offered to the centre for any locally listed patient. In the case with two high priority patients, the patients were ranked first and second on the matching run and received an offer of a kidney – one of these patients were transplanted.
- 10 In summary, the impact for kidney patients overall has been small and there were no cases identified where a patient was disadvantaged.

DCD Offering Pathway

- 11 Liver and kidneys were offered from 1469 UK DCD donors between 1 November 2021 and 29 June 2023. Of the 1469 donors, 590 (40%) donors were liver and kidney(s) donors, 17 (1%) were liver only donors and 418 (28%) were kidney only donors. Both liver and kidneys were transplanted from 373 (63%) of the 590 donors where both organs were retrieved and 3 of the 373 resulted in Simultaneous Liver and kidney (SLK) transplants.

RECOMMENDATION

- 12 Since the introduction of the new National Liver Offering Scheme (NLOS) in March 2018, a kidney from a DBD donor is held back for patients requiring a liver and kidney for up to 60 minutes after elective offering has commenced or until the combined liver kidney patient declines, whatever occurs first. It is recommended this should continue and be reviewed as part of the monitoring process of the liver offering scheme.
- 13 A kidney from a DCD donor is held back, subject to no tier A patients, until both the zonal and linked centre(s) have declined the combined liver kidney offer. It is recommended that this should continue and be reviewed regularly.

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August 2023