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LUNG TRANSPLANTATION WITH GRAFTS RECOVERED FROM EUTHANASIA DONORS

Dirk Van Raemdonck1, A. Neyrinck2, W. Coosemans1, H. Decaluwe1, P. De Leyn1, P. Nafteux1, H. Van Veer1, G.M. Verleden3
1Thoracic Surgery, University Hospitals Leuven, Leuven/Belgium,
2Anaesthesiology And Algology, University Hospitals Leuven, Leuven/Belgium,
3Pneumology, University Hospitals Leuven, Leuven/Belgium

Objectives:
Donors after circulatory death (DCD’s) enlarge the lung donor pool. We reviewed outcome in recipients transplanted with lungs recovered from controlled DCD’s Category-5 (euthanasia donors).

Methods:
Between 01/2007-12/2012, 47/350 (13.4%) patients received pulmonary grafts from controlled DCD’s, including 6 (1.7%) after euthanasia in accordance with state legislation and approval by Ethics Committee. Patients suffered from an unbearable neuromuscular (n=3) or neuropsychiatric (n=3) disorder with explicit wish to donate organs. Euthanasia was executed by an independent physician in a room adjacent to the operating room in the absence of the retrieval team.

Results:
Six recipients (2M–4M; median [range] age:51 [30-59] years) underwent bilateral lung transplantation for emphysema(n=3), pulmonary fibrosis(n=2), and BOS(n=1). Waiting time was 436 [195-507] days. In contrast to other DCD categories, pre-arrest agonal period was absent. Warm ischemic time between cardiac arrest and cold Perfadex® pulmonary flush was 13±3 min. Total ischemic time until reperfusion of the graft was 329 [225-427] min for first lung and 478 [346-603] min for second lung. No primary graft dysfunction grade 3 was present beyond T24. One recipient died after 3 months in ICU from an unrelated cardiac problem. Remaining patients were extubated after 2 [1-5] days and discharged from ICU after 7[2-10] days and from hospital after 27 [23-36] days. FEV1 and FVC increased from 20 [15-57]% and 59 [51-66]% pre-transplant to 85 [61-94]% and 75 [54-80]% at the time of hospital discharge, respectively; (p<0.01). Follow up was 37 [1-66] months. Actuarial survival and freedom from BOS grade 1 at 1, 3, and 5 years conditional to hospital discharge was 100%, 100%, and 100% and 100%, 100%, and 80%, respectively.

Conclusions:
Euthanasia donors accounted for 12.8% of all lung DCD’s. Immediate post-transplant graft function and long-term outcome in recipients was excellent. More euthanasia donors are to be expected with more public awareness.

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