

Current Renal transplants' deficit in Europe. A crisis or a chance to reconsider?

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Background

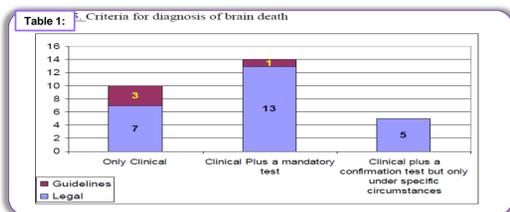
Human organ donation and transplantation are nowadays occupying an important part of drafting the national health policies. Prosperous European countries face significant difficulties in meeting the ever-increasing needs in renal transplants. The problem is even greater in those European countries that are either amidst a financial crisis or are currently developing. That was the reason why in 2007 the European Council established the European Committee on Organ Transplantation (CD-P-TO), aiming in addressing the lack of transplants and meeting the specific needs of each and every country. Despite all efforts, every day 18 people in Europe die while waiting for a renal transplant.

Method

The aim of this study is to analyze the above-mentioned issues that have led the developments in renal transplantation, both scientifically and policy-wise, during the last 15 years. An extensive literature review was conducted. European legislations, strategies, related factors and successful transplantation models were studied.

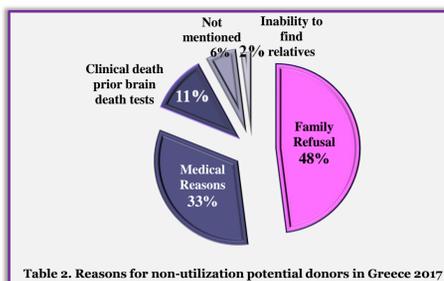
Results

The research showed that European countries face several difficulties in transplantation. Although CD-P-TO have set guidelines on the quality, safety and ethics regarding donation and transplantation, strategies continue to vary broadly in European countries.



Those different strategies and legislation variations combined with the lack of knowledge on donation and brain death diagnosis, the insecurities on the transparency of medical practices and organ trafficking, creates fear and negativity against transplantation. From the research conducted, it is also obvious that culture, education, place of residence, gender and religious beliefs alter the perception on the donation idea.

The family role and the time spent on a waiting list, are very important in increasing post-mortem and reducing living donation. Research revealed Also that prevention and risk factors modification seem to be the new path ahead.

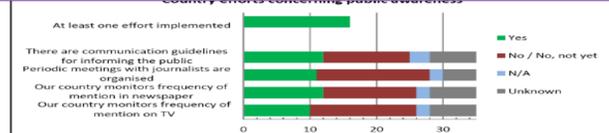


It also showed that before we successfully reach those goals, efforts should continue to focus in increasing and improving management of post-mortem donation; updating the existing transplant programs; and consolidating control mechanisms and legislation covering all aspects of the procedure.

Conclusion

The ability of developing national transplantation policies, consists of developing of an efficient health system, recruiting properly trained employees, providing sufficient funding for organ donation and transplantation, and managing programs for prevention of chronic health issues. Therefore all the above are not possible to be put in place overnight and of course not all countries need the same amount of support and finances. Understanding what the population of each country knows, believes, expects and wants regarding organ donation and transplantation, is the base on which the future transplantation strategies will be built upon. Despite that studies from many countries are now published, due to their lack of continuity and consistency, their results cannot be considered while national strategies are being developed. They are also focused on one subject and they do not take into account the characteristics of the whole population. Therefore it is impossible to find answers based on ambiguous and conditional conclusions.

Table 3: Commission Staff Working Document 25.4.2014: Initiatives stimulated by the authorities to improve quality in identification/ donation / procurement/ transplantation/ follow-up. Source: ACTOR study, page 139



Informing the public must be continuous and be carried out consistently. Public awareness and education should also start from early years at school and focus on specific individual and collective moral values, such as solidarity and reciprocity between humans. Success of these awareness and education campaigns, depends on the deep knowledge of all the different cultures within the multi-cultural societies of European countries. It is very important to change current strategies to a multi-dimensional model. It would also be careless to discuss the implementation of a successful transplantation program in all European countries as some recommend, as it would be extremely difficult this program be implemented in countries with lower healthcare and financial levels. It is more than obvious that in order to do more, additional resources are necessary; funds, work hours, number of employees, etc. Every country would address better the challenges of chronic issues, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disorders, through intervention against the risk factors leading to organ failure.

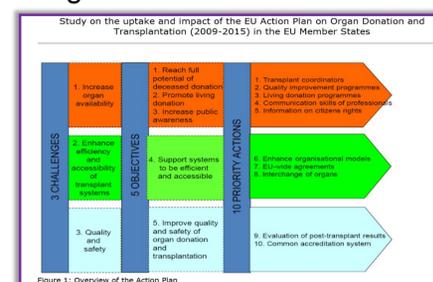
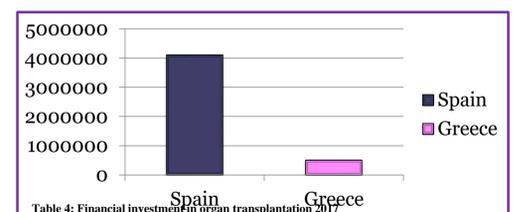


Table 5: EUROPEAN COMMISSION, FACTOR Study November 2017

Understanding all the above-mentioned, following Action Plans and consistent implementations of what is deemed necessary by each European country, are contributing factors to the solution for lack of organ donations.

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