

NEPHROLOGY

NEWS & ISSUES

Balancing Economics & Quality in Renal Care

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Initiatives focusing on transplantation highlight talks at NKF annual meeting

Developing international treatment guidelines for the kidney transplant recipient

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Introduction

The success of kidney transplantation and efforts to improve long-term post-transplant function has taken center stage in the past decade. In the pioneering days of kidney transplantation, preventing and treating acute rejection took precedence. With the introduction of new immunosuppressive medication regimens, early acute rejection rates have declined, and transplant loss due to uncontrollable rejection has almost become a thing of the past.¹ Despite this ongoing progress, transplants still fail after a median time of 10 years for deceased donor kidneys and after 15 years for living related kidneys.² Therefore, the focus has shifted to the long-term care of the recipients. This care includes the monitoring of immunosuppressive medication, monitoring of transplant function, and the treatment of complications. These complications include cardiovascular disease and its risk factors, infections, and post-transplant cancer, bone and mineral disorders, and hematologic complications. These and other complications are the focus of the guidelines entitled, "Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO) Care of Kidney Transplant Recipient," which will be presented at the National Kidney Foundation 2009 Spring Clinical Meetings later this month in Nashville, Tenn. The session will cover the guideline development process; the GRADE system used for rating evidence and strength of recommendations; and it will enumerate recommended initial maintenance immunosuppressive agents for the kidney transplant recipient.

Why is there a need for guidelines?

Previous guidelines, such as the "European Best Practice Guidelines for Renal Transplantation" or the guidelines from the American Society of Transplantation, already address the care of the kidney transplant recipients. The aim of the KDIGO guideline is to update these previous efforts, especially with respect to the long-term care of the kidney transplant recipient. In addition, the KDIGO guidelines are

rigorously evidence-based, using methodologies developed by KDIGO and others. The resulting guidelines developed by KDIGO are intended to improve care and enable programs around the world to offer transplantation to patients who might otherwise die of end-stage renal disease.

The timeline for guideline development

The initial workgroup meeting was in February 2007 in Boston, and this was followed by three meetings in September 2007 in Brussels, February 2008 in Boston and



2009 Spring Clinical Meetings
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For more information, visit www.nkfclinicalmeetings.org.

September 2008 in Prague. In the meantime, an advanced draft of the guidelines for the care of the kidney transplant recipient was presented to the KDIGO Board of Directors in Vienna in early December 2008. Currently the suggestions and critiques from the 49 board members are being incorporated and the existing manuscript modified before it will be sent out for public review. During spring 2009,

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