Transplanting Kidneys From Donors With Hepatitis C Is Feasible

In a recent small study, those who received such kidneys cured the virus through standard treatment.

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People without hepatitis C virus who need a kidney transplant may be able to receive one from a donor with HCV and then promptly receive curative treatment for the virus, Reuters Health reports. A recent small study found that direct-acting antiviral treatment was successful in this context and was not associated with any major treatment-related negative safety outcomes.

Publishing their findings in the Annals of Internal Medicine, researchers studied 10 HCV-negative individuals on the kidney transplant list. They had a median age of 71, 20 percent were women and 80 percent were white. They each received one transplanted kidney from 10 donors. The donors had a median age of 30, 50 percent were women and all were white. The organ recipients waited for a median of one month between entering the study and receiving a kidney transplant.

All study members received one dose of Zepatier (grazoprevir/elbasvir) immediately before receiving their transplant. Those whose donors had genotype 1 of hep C continued to receive Zepatier for 12 weeks following their transplant while those with genotypes 2 or 3 received both Zepatier and Sovaldi (sofosbuvir) for 12 weeks.

All transplant recipients contracted hep C from their donors. Two of them experienced elevated aminotransferase liver enzyme levels. All 10 individuals achieved a sustained virologic response 12 weeks after completing therapy (SVR12, considered a cure).

None of the study members experienced major adverse health events related to their hep C treatment.

“If confirmed in larger studies,” the study authors concluded, “this strategy should markedly expand organ options and reduce mortality for kidney transplant candidates without HCV infection.”

To read the Reuters Health article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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