

Transplants & Substance Use Disorders: Important Conversations to Explore Before Donation

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14th Annual Living Donation Conference

Presented by the American Foundation for Donation and Transplantation

UPMC's Living-Donor Liver Transplant Program

Commitment to provide liver transplant services to all who will benefit, including those who other transplant centers deem high-risk or unfit for transplant

UPPMC

LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

Responsibility to protect patients from potential negative outcomes (medical & psychosocial)

vs.

Responsibility to protect patient autonomy



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Potential Living Donor

- Male in his 40s, seeking to donate to biological sister
- Medically and surgically appropriate for donation
- History of severe alcohol use disorder, sustained remission 9 years
 - High-intensity exercise is an important coping skill in his recovery
- No history of treatment for substance use disorder, but active in his local peer support recovery community
 - Numerous discussions with his sponsor prior to evaluation
 - Donor's intention was to view his donation as a "no strings attached gift"
- No history of mental health diagnoses, no current symptoms



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Potential Recipient

- Caucasian female in her 40s with alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver
- History of alcohol use disorder, severe in remission for a shorter period than the recipient
- Pathway to addiction recovery, treatment and maintenance different from potential living donor's experience



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Conversations with Living Donors: When Donors Have Substance Use Disorders

- What is your current recovery status?
 - History of treatment for substance use disorders?
- How do you maintain your recovery?
 - How would you adapt post-surgery?
- What are your thoughts about taking pain management medications?
 - Plan for medication management?
- How would you feel if you experienced a relapse?
 - Would you expect to regret your choice to donate?



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Conversations with Living Donors: When Recipients Have Substance Use Disorders

- Do you know why the recipient needs a transplant?
 - If the need for transplant is related to substance use disorders, what are your thoughts about this?
- How would you expect yourself to feel if the recipient experienced a relapse post-transplant?
 - Would you expect to regret your choice to donate?
 - How would you expect it to impact your relationship with the recipient?



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Takeaways

- Ensuring informed consent means talking through a variety of potentially distressing outcomes with potential donors
- A framework for these important conversations is needed, but individualized discussions are typically necessary



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Special thanks to all the living donors who give the gift of life.



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Questions & Case Discussion



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