Patient-Focused Care and Successful Transplants for Improved Quality of Life

Diabetes is the leading cause of end-stage renal disease and a national health problem; 23.6 million Americans have been diagnosed with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Many patients with diabetes seek pancreas transplantation as a medical alternative to lifelong dialysis. Frequently, these select patients may also be candidates for pancreas transplantation to replace insulin therapy.

The UPMC Pancreas Transplantation Program has historically been home to many of the world’s most recognized transplant experts for both pancreas and kidney-pancreas transplants in patients with diabetes. With improved surgical techniques, UPMC surgeons have found that pancreas transplantation offers new hope to patients with insulin-dependent diabetes, with or without end-stage renal disease. Successful pancreas transplantation improves quality of life, achieves a euglycemic state, and may help to prevent or improve secondary complications of diabetes.

Our experts have pioneered immunosuppression regimens and introduced a preconditioning treatment and a steroid-free protocol with consistently favorable results for transplant patients. This protocol reduces multiple-drug, heavy-maintenance immunosuppressive therapy, and drug toxicity.

As a pioneer in the field of solid organ transplantation, our program has been challenged with some of the most difficult and complex cases. UPMC specialists are experienced in providing care for high-risk patients such as those with viral infections (hepatitis B or C, HIV), highly sensitized patients, (continued)
and patients who have had multiple previous transplants. Our surgeons and specialists have used this experience to develop new and improved treatments while maintaining outcomes at or near national averages.

To view specific information about our outcomes, including one- and three-year survival rates, please visit the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) at http://www.ustransplant.org.

A Multidisciplinary Approach with a Single Focus

The UPMC Pancreas Transplantation Program is part of a comprehensive system that brings together highly experienced surgical and medical specialists to care for patients throughout their course of treatment. Our team of endocrinologists, nephrologists, transplant surgeons, pharmacists, certified clinical transplant coordinators, nutritionists, psychologists, social workers, and other specialists provide outstanding personalized care to patients.

Is Your Patient a Candidate?

Patients with the following conditions may benefit from a pancreas transplant:

- insulin-dependent type 1 diabetes that is difficult to control
- hypoglycemic unawareness event with excellent medical management

The ideal candidate has diabetes with no renal failure. However, the majority of pancreas transplant candidates have progressive secondary complications of type 1 diabetes, despite satisfactory glucose control. These include:

- diabetic nephropathy
- diabetic neuropathy
- diabetic retinopathy
- autonomic neuropathy or gastroparesis
- accelerated arteriosclerosis

Due to the prevalence of renal complications in patients with diabetes, some whom become candidates for pancreas transplantation may have underlying renal problems. These patients may be candidates for a simultaneous kidney-pancreas transplant or a kidney transplant followed by a pancreas transplant at a later date. Pancreas-after-kidney transplantation is best when a living donor is available to provide the kidney.

Research that Continues to Improve Patient Care

UPMC is a leader in immunosuppressive therapy and other cutting-edge research and advancements. Our latest work focuses on reducing or even eliminating the need for antirejection medications to support long-term outcomes. This includes pioneering recipient pretreatment (preconditioning) to prevent initial rejection, while reducing the need for high doses of antirejection medications immediately after surgery.

Partnering for Life

We take pride in keeping the lines of communication open with patients, families, and referring physicians regarding status, procedures, treatments, and follow-up care. Although a pancreas transplant is a complex, serious procedure, we maintain a personal, patient-focused approach that takes into consideration the stress and concerns many individuals experience throughout the evaluation, operation, and recovery period.

To ensure optimal continuity of patient care, the UPMC pancreas transplant team pursues a collaborative approach with referring physicians. UPMC’s transplant surgeons and physicians are available for consultations 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Throughout the transplant process, a member of the transplant team will continually update the referring physician about the patient’s progress. This partnership begins at the time of referral and continues throughout the patient’s stay in the hospital and long after they are discharged. After transplant, our patients receive postoperative care from our pancreas transplant team.

Referring Your Patient

To refer a patient to the UPMC Pancreas Transplantation Program:

1. Have ready the following information:
   - demographic information (name, date of birth, address, phone number, emergency contacts)
   - original diagnosis, including prior history of medical care and previous medical tests performed (radiologic and pathology reports, inpatient/outpatient records, lab reports, reports of previous transplant evaluations)
   - insurance information

2. Call 1-800-544-2500 or 412-647-5800 to speak with a clinician or e-mail transplant@upmc.edu.

3. Mail, fax, or e-mail all related information and medical records regarding your case to the office.

4. After receipt of medical records and financial clearance, the initial evaluation for your patient will be scheduled.

For more information about referring a patient, visit www.upmc.com/transplant.