HCV-Positive Kidney Transplants

A recent study found that transplanting such kidneys and then treating the recipient for hep C worked well.

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People waiting for a kidney transplant may do well to receive such an organ from a donor with hepatitis C virus (HCV). A recent small study found that doing so and then treating the recipient with direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) was safe and effective.

Researchers conducted a study of 20 HCV-negative individuals who received kidney transplants from 15 different HCV-positive donors.

After they received their kidneys, the participants were treated with the HCV regimen Zepatier (grazoprevir/elbasvir); all were cured of the virus. Everyone was also treated with standard immunosuppression therapy to prevent rejection of the new organ; no one experienced organ rejection.

None of the participants experienced serious adverse health events definitively associated with hep C or with treatment of the virus.

The study authors compared the results of eGFR and creatinine level lab tests (each an indication of kidney function) six and 12 months post-surgery among the participants with test results from a group of matched HCV-negative kidney recipients. The results were comparable between the two groups.

“[This process] has the potential to expand the donor pool if these data are validated in larger trials with longer follow-up,” says one of the study’s heads, David S. Goldberg, MD, an assistant professor of medicine and epidemiology at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

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