

Potential donor audit

K.M. Barber, J.C. Hussey, C.J. Rudge

UK Transplant, Fox Den Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8RR

UK Transplant's (UKT) national potential donor audit (PDA) began in January 2003, as part of a series of measures to improve organ donation. No large scale donor audits have been undertaken in the UK since the late 1980s/ early 1990s, and although various local exercises are being carried out to assess the numbers of brain stem dead patients, a national approach has obvious advantages.

UKT's PDA aims to provide an up-to-date assessment of the potential for organ donation from Intensive Care Units (ICUs) throughout the UK. The audit will identify the number of patients who could be heartbeating or non-heartbeating donors and will establish the obstacles to donation.

A pilot of the PDA began in May 2002, using an audit form developed by UKT in collaboration with other appropriate personnel. The 21 donor liaison nurses (DLNs) funded by UKT completed one form for each patient death in each ICU that they covered. Several donor transplant co-ordinator teams also participated in the pilot study with a total of 130 ICUs involved. The pilot study continued until 31 December 2002.

An evaluation of seven months of data collected from the pilot study (June-December 2002) showed that at the time of analysis, 104 hospitals (130 ICUs) had reported at least one patient death.

Of the 3,926 audited deaths, brain stem death was confirmed in 296 (8%) patients. Moreover, for 258 patients the possibility of solid organ donation was suggested to relatives and consent for donation was given for 152 (59%) patients. Of the 258 patients, 131 (51%) became cadaveric heartbeating solid organ donors. In 38 (13%) of 296 families was there no discussion of donation with relatives.

The national PDA is currently being carried out using the UKT form amended in light of experience gained from the pilot study. The forms are being completed by DLNs in the ICUs where they are in post (35) and by donor transplant co-ordinators and/or link nurses in all other units. Data from the national PDA are currently being analysed and more up-to-date results for 2003 data will be presented.

UKT hopes that the national PDA will continue to raise the profile of organ donation and heighten awareness of donation issues amongst all critical care staff. In addition, it will allow a realistic estimate to be made of the true potential for organ donation in the UK and will allow both local and national obstacles to realising the potential to be identified.