

Half a century of renal transplantation activity in the busiest unit of our country - How far have we gone

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ABSTRACT

Background: Kidney transplantation (KTx) is the gold standard therapy of renal failure affecting the quality and longevity of life. Our country has introduced KTx early in the 70's and the first one performed in our unit was in 1971. Since then, a lot has changed and in 1984 the transplant unit started running in the current legal status.

Methods: We performed a retrospective analysis of the transplant activity in our unit.

Results: Since 1971, 3249 KTx procedures were performed through the end of 2024, 1558 from deceased donors and 1691 from living donors. 6 patients were treated with autotransplantation, 4 simultaneous pancreas and kidney and 2 combined liver and kidney transplants. 66.7% of patients were male. Since 2005, the incompatible programme of KTx started, initially ABOi and consequently HLAi.

Our unit is the 2nd in Europe that started using Imlifidase as part of desensitisation protocol in potential recipients with preformed antibodies to the donor and positive cross match. So far 4 patients were transplanted with only one experiencing acute rejection on the table and subsequent nephrectomy.

Conclusions: We are optimistic that new horizons will open in transplantation, as with the support of the government the deceased donation rate has increased from 4.4 donors per million population in 2019 to 10 in 2024. Improving the transplant candidate work-up, optimising maintenance on the waiting list, and providing outstanding post-transplant care will be vital to the continued success of KTx.

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INTRODUCTION

Kidney transplantation (KTx) is the gold standard therapy of renal failure affecting the quality and longevity of life. Our country has introduced KTx early in the 70's and the first one performed in our unit was in 1971. Since then, a lot has changed and in 1984 the transplant unit started running in the current legal status.

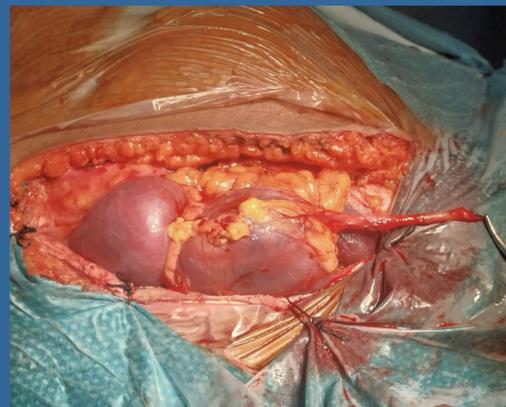
AIM AND METHODS

Kidney transplantation is the gold standard treatment for kidney failure. Our aim is to highlight the progress that has been done the last 50 years in our Unit and to make the plans for the future.

We performed a retrospective analysis of the transplant activity in our unit. All patients were included since the start of the kidney transplantation in Laiko General Hospital in Athens.

RESULTS

Since 1971, **3249** KTx procedures were performed through the end of 2024, **1558** from deceased donors and **1691** from living donors. 6 patients were treated with Auto-transplantation, 4 simultaneous pancreas and kidney and 2 combined liver and kidney transplants. 66.7% of patients were male. Since 2005, the **incompatible programme** of KTx started, initially ABOi and consequently HLAi. To overcome the incompatibility issues, the **paired pool donation** was added, with the first one performed intercontinentally in 2011. 4 pairs were transplanted and 12 live donors donated to the cadaveric waiting list for their incompatible potential recipient. 10 year survival rate of the iKTx was 91.9%, with graft survival 75.6% compared to the survival rate of comp KTx of 93.7% and graft survival 79.4%.



RESULTS

The surgical challenge for the unit was the introduction of the **laparoscopic donor nephrectomy** in 2018. Since then, only 3 donors had an open procedure. The **paediatric KTx** are also part of the program initially sporadically but since 2019 as an organised program in collaboration with the paediatric hospital and the support of the anaesthetic department 34 kids were transplanted (23 live donor and 8 deceased) with a mean age of 13.6 years.

HIGHLIGHTS		
3249 kidney transplants	1558 deceased donors	1691 live donors
Paediatric recipients	Youngest was 9 years old – 26 kgs	
Incompatible transplants since 2005	Both ABOi and HLAi	
Introduction of Laparoscopic	donor nephrectomy in 2018	

DISCUSSION

We are optimistic that new horizons will open in transplantation, as with the support of the Greek government the deceased donation rate has increased from 4.4 donors per million population in 2019 to 10 in 2024. Improving the transplant candidate work-up, optimising maintenance on the waiting list, and providing outstanding post-transplant care will be vital to the continued success of KTx.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To all our Senior doctors who worked in our unit and inspired us to continue their inspiration of making transplant available to more patients.
To all the donors and their families who make this effort possible.