Content

“Transplant Trauma-New tactics fight the growing organ donor deficit”, in the January 13, 2003 issue of U.S. News & World Report authored by Avery Comarow addresses the growing concern of the organ shortage, and the options we have to stop the tragic deaths of at least 17 to 18 people a day who wait for their miracle to happen. The steady increase of live kidney and liver donors could become much lower because of the death of 57 year old Michael Hurewitz. Mr. Hurewitz donated part of his liver to his brother in January of 2002 and died a short time after giving this unselfish gift. His death was later found to have occurred because of sloppy postoperative care. This has prompted new guidelines to protect the healthy living donor. According to Comarow, David Conti, the director of abdominal transplant surgery at Albany Medical Center, is drawing up new policies to protect the live donor. Because there is such a huge risk associated with this gift the donor must fully be prepared for the possibility of more hospital stays and other complications as well as the emotional aspect that sometimes gets overlooked. Vickie, the widow of Michael Hurewitz, also urges the committees who over see the organ donations to keep a registry of all live donors to track their progress. This will help educate future live donors of what the risks may or may not be. Unfortunately the outlook for this report does not look good, according to Comarow’s article a recent study in the journal Transplantation, for
example, revealed that 56 kidney donors later needed a kidney themselves. Two died while waiting for one, and in 43 people who did get kidneys, seven no longer functioned. He also reported that a study published in 2002, in Liver Transplantation, reported that 1 in 10 liver donors had to be rehospitalized and 1 in 14 required repeat surgery. I have put this in my working outline

The other solutions discussed in this article are the “opt out” program where everyone is considered a donor upon death unless they actively opt out of the program. Michael Hurewitz’s widow, Vickie, prefers this approach to helping solve this ever increasing problem of organ shortages. The state of Texas is pursuing the possibility of being the first state to adopt the “opt out” / Presumed consent approach. In June of 2002 the American Medical Association (AMA) started looking into financial incentives for cadaver organ donation, they hope offering monetary gifts may begin to close the gap on such a widespread problem. The U.S. congress has looked into several bills that would give live donors and families of cadaver donors up to $10,000.00 tax credit.

Reaction

I chose this article because it had the personal touch of Michael Hurewitz death and due to her husband’s death Vickie Hurewitz has become outspoken and I feel she is a credible resource for the article. This article also answered some of my questions about the care of the live donors. I had a childhood friend who has died after receiving a new kidney and I also had a friend who gave his mother one of his kidneys, so the story of the Hurewitz and her fight to reform organ donation was especially touching for me.

I still need to find out what organs live donors can donate. I want to know how many
organs one healthy (?) cadaver can produce, how many people it can help. I need to know if anyone has taken on the role making the public aware of the problem such as a movie star or Politician. If so I do not think the word is getting out.

This article will help fill in some the holes about the live donors and what is being done to protect them.

I felt this article had a lot of great facts and information.

**Quotes**

“Every morning, more than 80,000 people awaiting a new heart, liver, kidney, or other organ wake up to a brutal imbalance of supply and demand. During the next 24 hours, it is likely that 66 of them will receive a transplant and 17 will die— and, by the way, 115 new names will be added to the waiting lists. Day by day, the organ deficit and the human toll grow” (Camarow).

“A survey of some 250 residents of a conservative portion of west Texas, conducted for the Presumed Consent Foundation by Texas University. The results show that 89 percent of the respondents think presumed consent would increase the number of organs and that 57 percent would be in favor of it” (Camarow).

“I don’t have a solution other than to say, ‘Please God, give us a supply,’ and that’s why I end many of my talks with references to xenotransplants,” says Francis Delmonico, a federal advisory panel member and director of kidney transplantation at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. But issues here include not only rejection but unknown viruses carried by animals in their tissues, and no one believes the public will unhesitatingly embrace the idea” (Camarow).