

The 2009 Annual Report of the OPTN and SRTR

Liver Transplantation in the United States, 1999-2008

Overview

- Changes in organ allocation policy in 2002 reduced the number of adult patients on the liver transplant waiting list, changed the characteristics of transplant recipients, and increased the number of patients receiving simultaneous liver-kidney transplantation.
- The number of liver transplants peaked in 2006 and declined marginally in 2007 and 2008. During this period, there was an increase in donor age, the Donor Risk Index, the number of candidates receiving MELD exception scores, and the number of recipients with hepatocellular carcinoma.
- In contrast, there was a decrease in retransplantation rates, and the number of patients receiving grafts from either a living donor or from donation after cardiac death.
- The proportion of patients with severe obesity, diabetes and renal insufficiency increased during this period. Despite increases in donor and recipient risk factors, there was a trend towards better 1-year graft and patient survival between 1998-2007.
- Of major concern, however, were considerable regional variations in waiting time and post-transplant survival.
- The current status of liver transplantation in the United States between 1999 and 2008 was analyzed using SRTR data.
- Additionally, a more detailed analysis of liver transplantation for hepatitis C, retransplantation and simultaneous liver-kidney transplantation is included.

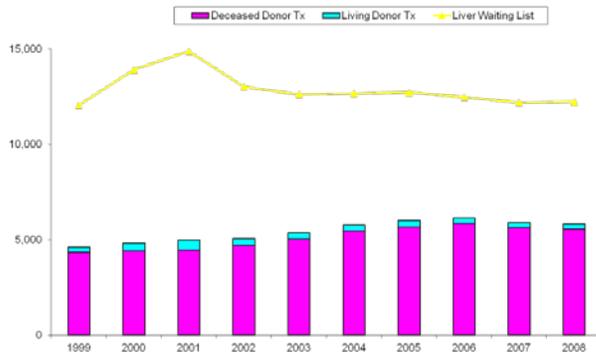
The figures on the following page are “dashboard” views of the state of liver transplantation. Details on these figures and explanations of the methods used in creating them are included in Chapter IV of this year’s report.

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The data and analyses reported in the 2009 Annual Report of the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network and the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients have been supplied by the United Network for Organ Sharing and the Arbor Research Collaborative for Health under contract with the Department of Health and Human Services. The authors alone are responsible for reporting and interpreting these data; the views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Government.

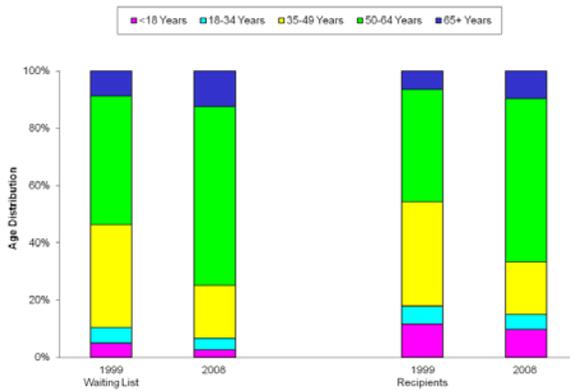
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Liver Transplantation at a Glance



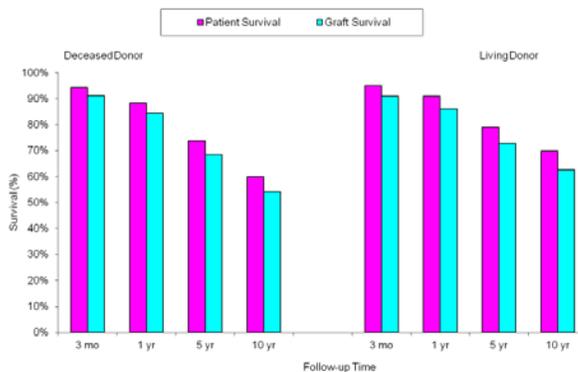
Number of Transplants and Size of Active Waiting List.

The number of patients awaiting a liver transplant at year-end peaked in 2001; this is clearly related to the introduction of the MELD/PELD allocation system in 2002. The number who received a deceased donor liver transplant has gradually increased, reaching a peak in 2006. The gap between the numbers of candidates and recipients has been slowly shrinking since 2002. Source: 2009 OPTN/SRTR Annual Report, Tables 1.7, 9.1a, 9.1b.



Age Distribution of Recipients and Active Waiting List.

The numbers of candidates and recipients age 35-49 years remained fairly constant over the decade, but the age group's proportion by both measures declined. Recipients included transplants from both living and deceased donors. Source: 2009 OPTN/SRTR Annual Report, Tables 9.1a, 9.4a, 9.4b.



Unadjusted Patient and Graft Survival.

Patient survival in recent years has been improving for both deceased donors and living donors, with 74% and 79% of patients, respectively, alive 5 years following transplantation. Patient survival was higher than graft survival because of the opportunity for repeat liver transplantation in the event of graft failure. Source: 2009 OPTN/SRTR Annual Report, Tables 9.10a, 9.10b, 9.14a, and 9.14b.