



Evolution of Organ Transplantation in Poland 1966 to 2014: Dates and Numbers

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ABSTRACT

Background. Several events inspired us to collect data on organ transplantation in Poland (2016: the 50th anniversary of the first transplantation and the 20th anniversary of Polish Transplant Coordinating Center Poltransplant). The paper aims at presenting comprehensive data on all organ transplants, beginning with the first in 1966 (deceased kidney) until the end of 2014.

Methods. Source documents were reports published in *Poltransplant Bulletin*, a website registry managed by Poltransplant, reports by the Transplantation Council and by the Transplantation Institute of Warsaw. A source data enabled us to establish a preliminary report, presented for verification during the 12th Congress of the Polish Transplantation Society.

Results. By the end of 2014, the total number of organ transplants was 26,691. Kidney transplantation is the most common (total number = 19,812). The number of living kidney transplants is low, about 50 per year. The number of liver part transplants from living donors is relatively high, 20 to 30 annually. The program of deceased liver transplantation results in more than 300 transplants yearly. The first heart transplantation was in 1985, but the number of these procedures has been decreasing. No significant increase in the number of lung transplantations was noted.

Conclusions. The number of organ transplantations from deceased donors places Poland in the middle among European countries. The number of living donor kidney transplants is lower than in other countries; therefore a living donor liver transplantation program belongs to leading programs. Progress of lung transplantation has been slow. The development is highlighted by vascularized composite tissue transplantations of the hands and face. The strength of the report lies in its reliability and completeness. Numbers are the unique source of information to be used and referred to in the literature.

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SEVERAL events have inspired us to collect and publish comprehensive data (dates and numbers) on the history and development of organ transplantation in Poland. The stimulus to present this originated from the following facts:

- January 2016 will mark the 50th anniversary of the first organ transplantation in Poland (deceased kidney).
- The year 2016 will bring the 20th anniversary of Polish Transplant Coordinating Center Poltransplant, the national transplant organization and competent authority in the field of organ donation and transplantation [1,2].
- In 2015 and 2016, a multifaceted campaign promoting transplantation medicine (broadcasting the ideas and knowledge about the transplantation of organs, tissues, and cells in the society and building support for this method of treatment), titled Approval for Life, has been carried out within the framework of the National Program of Progress in Transplantation Medicine, financed by public funds of the Ministry of Health [3].

The idea of presenting such a comprehensive country-wide review, unprecedented in its extensiveness, often requiring research into original records, emerged prior to the 12th Congress of the Polish Transplantation Society held in Gdańsk on September 3 through 5, 2015, where the transplant community would have the opportunity to provide feedback on the data.

The paper aims at presenting, in the form of an easy-to-read table (Table 1), comprehensive data (dates and numbers) on all organ transplants in Poland, beginning with the first in 1966 until the end of 2014. Consecutively, original source documents were analyzed; data collected by the transplantation community over the years were evaluated and finally presented as a review approved by the Polish Transplant Coordinating Center Poltransplant, as well as home and international transplant communities as a reliable source of information.

METHODS

Initially, as source documents, the following were accepted:

- reports on transplantation activities published annually since 1997 in the *Poltransplant Bulletin* (data for 1996–2014) [4];
- a website registry (www.rejestr.net) managed by Poltransplant (data since 1998);
- unpublished reports by the Transplantation Council, presented annually to the Minister of Health by this advisory body (1996–2014);
- data base of the Transplantation Institute of the Medical University of Warsaw (kidney transplantations 1966–2005);
- available literature and congress presentations (predominantly Polish) [5–7].

A review of source data enabled the authors to establish a preliminary report, in table form, which was presented for verification by the transplant community during the 12th Congress of the Polish Transplantation Society in September 2015 and published in the *Poltransplant Bulletin*. Data contained in the table were in accord

with records of representatives of the transplant community. The data table was finally approved and authorized by Poltransplant for English-language publication.

RESULTS

By the end of 2014, the total number of organ transplants in Poland was 26,691. The first organ transplantation (deceased kidney) was performed in Warsaw on January 26, 1966. Kidney transplantation is the most common type of transplant conducted annually in Poland; the total number of such transplants was 19,812. Notably, the number of living donor transplants is low (about 50 per year). In contrast, the number of liver part transplants from living donors is relatively high (about 20–30 such cases per annum). The program of deceased liver transplantation results in more than 300 transplants yearly. The first heart transplantation in Poland was in 1985, but the number of these procedures has been decreasing over the past few years. No significant increase in the number of lung transplantations was noted (about 20 such procedures yearly). Recent years have seen emerging programs of pancreas transplantation alone and islet cell transplantations, as well as vascularized multi-tissue allografts (hands and face). Complete and detailed information on organ transplantation in Poland is presented in Table 1.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper presents data, in table form, on all (including historical, pre-registry numbers) organ transplantations performed in Poland. The analysis of collected data permits the commentary below:

- The history and course of development of organ transplantation in Poland has been similar to those observed in other European countries.
- The number of organ transplantations from deceased donors places Poland among European countries with an average number of transplants [8].
- The number of living donor kidney transplants is considerably lower than in many other countries in Europe [9,10].
- Liver transplantation is the most actively developing transplant program [11,12].
- Living donor liver transplantation program belongs among leading programs of this type in Europe (nearly all transplantations were performed in pediatric recipients) [13,14].
- A decrease in heart transplantations has been observed, similarly to tendencies around the world.
- Progress of the program of lung transplantation, the most actively growing treatment by organ transplantation in Europe, has been slow in Poland.
- The development of transplantation medicine in Poland is highlighted by pioneering programs of vascularized composite tissue allografts of the hands and face.

The strength of the above report lies in its reliability and completeness. Data from the period 1996 to 2014 were

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