Reviewer's report

Title: Medium-term outcome of recipients of marginal donor hearts selected with new stress-echocardiographic techniques over standard criteria

Version: 1 Date: 29 March 2014

Reviewer: mario Previtali

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Minor compulsory revisions:

1) Results: The presentation of the data is not clear, at least to me: the authors say that 43 of the 57 marginal donor hearts deemed eligible for transplant were eventually transplanted. According to the data presented, the total number of pts deemed eligible but not transplanted should be 16 (9 pts in the stress protocol + 5 pts in the HT protocol + 2 additional pts in the HT protocol who had CAD at the pre-harvesting angiography), so the total number of marginal hearts transplanted should be 41 not 43. The alternative explanation of these data is that the pts in the HT protocol were considered eligible only after coronary angiography ruled out the presence of coronary stenosis, so the 2 pts with CAD are not taken into account. This point should be clarified in the methods and in the results presentation.

2) Results, Figure 2: The figure presents the survival curves of the 3 groups of pts using the Kaplan-Meier method. Given the very small number of pts in the 3 groups, I doubt that an evaluation of the differences in the survival in the 3 groups is correct from a statistical point of view and, more important, has any clinical significance. The opinion of an expert statistician would be useful to assess this point.

3) Discussion: Limitations of the study: The authors should give some references to support their statements that "the presence of donor-transmitted coronary atherosclerosis does not accelerate progression of intimal hyperplasia" and that "donor-transmitted coronary atherosclerosis increases the incidence of cardiac allograft vasculopathy"

Discretionary revisions:

1) Methods: the authors should specify the criteria used for selecting dipyridamole or dobutamine for the stress echo. It would also useful for the reader to know if in this population there are specific contraindications to the use of the 2 drugs.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests of any type to declare