Reviewer's report

Title: Benefit in liver transplantation. A survey among medical staff, patients, medical students and non-medical university staff and students

Version: 0 Date: 01 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Katrina A. Bramstedt

Reviewer's report:

1. Please clarify this sentence (line 80, page 5): "Medical students in their clinical semester". What year students?

2. You indicated a waiver of consent was granted by the local ethics committee, but clarify in detail, did a research ethics committee grant approval for the study to be performed? This is important to know because 2 vulnerable populations were enrolled (students, and patients awaiting transplant).

3. Use of the word "success" is very unusual in medicine because it can have many meanings depending on who you ask. "Benefit" might be a more appropriate term to use, especially because it is part of the clinical concept "capacity to benefit" and well known as a research concept (risks and benefits). Also, there is literature on the concept of capacity to benefit in the setting of transplant.

4. Page 7, line 128-129: Were "gain in lifetime" and quality of life" the only 2 possible answers? Was this how YOU were defining success or how the RESEARCH SUBJECTS were defining success? It is not clear. The authors should make a clear stipulation of what they think success is.

5. Page 9, lines 172-173, "According to the German Transplant Law, prospect of success and urgency shall be considered in the organ allocation system (§ 12 (3) TPG)." Does German Transplant Law define success? If not, state that.

6. Page 10, lines 238-239: "the lung allocation scheme incorporates prospect of success in addition to urgency in Germany". Tell the readers what is use as a definition of success in that setting (lung)?

7. Same as above also for kidney/EPTS... what is their definition of success?
8. Lines 247-257, "Adding the prospect of success to the liver allocation system is currently limited by the lack of an accurate quantitative measure of the prospect of success criteria. Diverse definitions or target criteria of prospect of success exist.[5] Prospect of success is best understood as a utilitarian concept as a criterion that favors the maximization of net benefit for the highest possible number of patients. This general rule, however, can be operationalized in different ways: Save the most lives of individual patients, save the most life years of the group of patients [5, 12, 17, 25] or maximize the survival benefit of them (difference of lifetime with vs. without a liver transplant) [26-31]. The guidelines of the German Medical Association (GMA) define prospect of success as longer-term sufficient transplant function translating into a longer-term survival of the recipient with an improved quality of life.[2]" THIS TEXT IS VERY IMPORTANT and should come much earlier in the paper--- start with it as your stipulations.

9. Still unclear for me regarding methods, but perhaps a limitation of the study is failure to ask people what their definition of success is, rather then telling them.

10. Any speculation on why 14% of medical staff don't want to be organ donors (in general)?

11. Please update your paper and literature search to include the concept of "capacity to benefit" as it is already thoroughly discussed in transplant world:
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15586997 and
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2579412/ and
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21951635 and
pit.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/11/24/1526924816679841.full ALSO see pages 48 - 84 of PhD dissertation:
http://arrow.monash.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/monash:6147;jsessionid=0B199818B4E58BE7AEF9B6C4E88382EC?f0=sm_creator%3A%22Bramstedt%2C+Katrina+Andre%22

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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