

Racial disparities in kidney transplantation rates eased by system's new rules

Changes to the system that distributes deceased donor kidneys nationwide helped increase the rates of transplants for African American and Hispanic dialysis patients on the waiting list, according to a new study from Johns Hopkins University. The system's old algorithm originally gave priority to patients based on how long they had been on the list. In December 2014, the algorithm was changed to give priority to patients based on how long they had been on dialysis. The goal of the changes was to increase transplant accessibility to minorities.

To determine whether the changes had any effect, researchers examined transplant records from nearly two years before the new rules were in place to nearly 10 months afterward. Results showed transplant rates for deceased donor kidney recipients increased 19 percent for African Americans and 13 percent for Hispanics.

However, the study's authors emphasize the new rules have not helped to increase the overall amount of minority patients on the list. The data also showed decreased transplantation rates for patients between the ages of 51 and 70. Researchers say that more changes are needed to effectively improve the system for patients, minorities in particular.

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