

Live donation - liver

As you will be aware in most circumstances organs for donation come from individuals who meet stringent criteria for brain death, but recently surgical techniques have been developed for removing half of a liver from a live donor for transplantation into a spouse/friend or close relative.

Live donation of kidneys for transplantation is well established in the UK, accounting for up to 25% of all organs donated, and live liver donation occurs extensively in the Far East (for instance Korea and Japan) is responsible for up to 10% of all transplants in Europe and the USA. We are now introducing such a program in Cambridge.

The benefit for the recipient is that the waiting time for an organ may be shorter and that high quality of the donated liver is assured, although that has to be weighted against a slightly higher complication rate as only a half liver is transplanted. Nevertheless, overall results for the recipient are very similar to standard transplantation. Complications can also occur in the donor so the possibility of those needs to be taken into account as well.

This is an area of transplant activity that is very tightly monitored by various regulatory authorities, in order to ensure high quality of practice and optimise safety for the donor, and overall outcome for the recipient. We feel that it is something that should be considered, where possible, in all our cases. If you want to know more about this you can contact the live donor liver coordinator on phone 01223 216672 (answer phone) or pager 07623 858425 who would be happy to explain it all in more detail.