

Understanding Psychiatric and Psychosocial Needs of Living Organ Donors and Transplant Recipients

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Introduction

- Transplant donors and recipients receive routine medical and surgical follow-up. Psychiatric follow-up only occurs if a problem is identified.
- Research suggests that donors and recipients may experience difficulties with psychological and physical functioning, social relationships, and other stressors following surgery.
- We want to better understand donor and recipient experiences to determine the best way to support them after surgery.

Methods

We identified 551 patients who had been a living organ donor or recipient in the last 3 years. Surveys were sent via email to gather information on demographics, surgery details/experiences, mood (PHQ-9) and anxiety (GAD-7) symptoms, and social support.

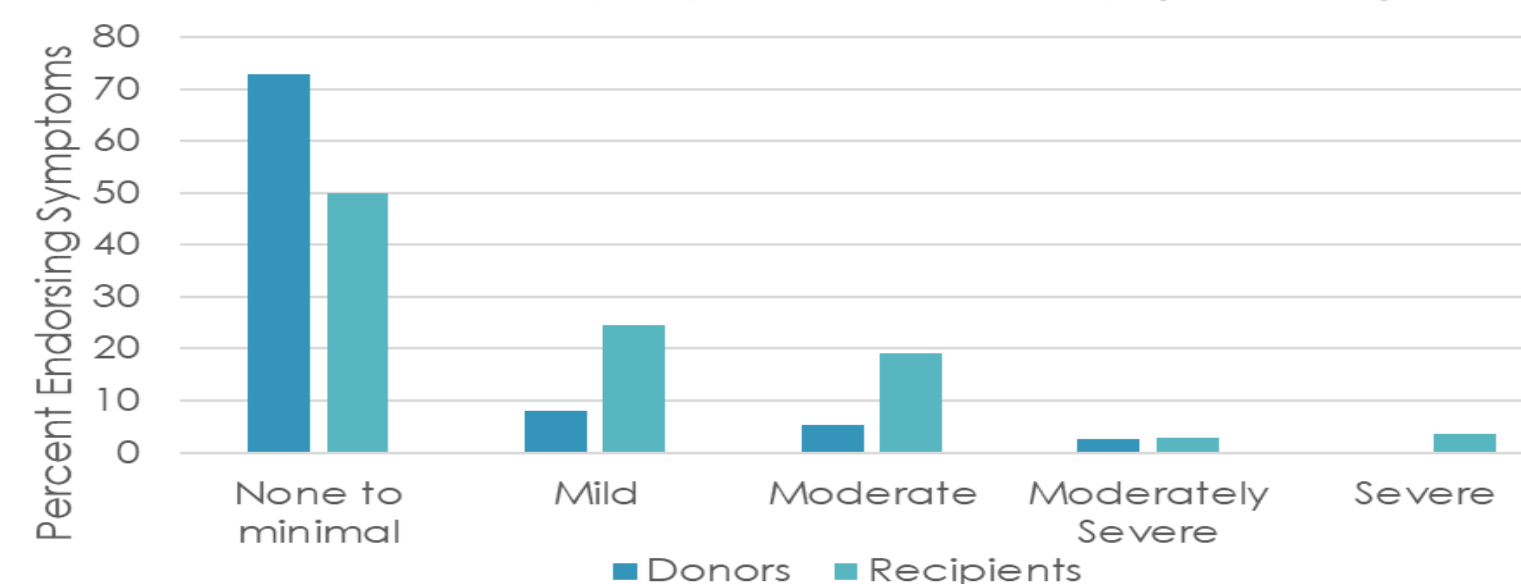
Participants:

- *Respondents:* 149 (27% response rate)
- *Mean age:* 54.32 years (25 - 79, SD = 13.08)
- *Gender identity:* 48.3% F, 51.0% M, 0.7% non-binary
- *Ethnicity:* 91.3% White, 4.7% Black/African-American, 2.7% Asian, 0.7% American Indian, 0.7% Other
- *Organ type:* 83 kidney (26 donors, 57 recipients) and 63 liver (10 donors, 53 recipients)

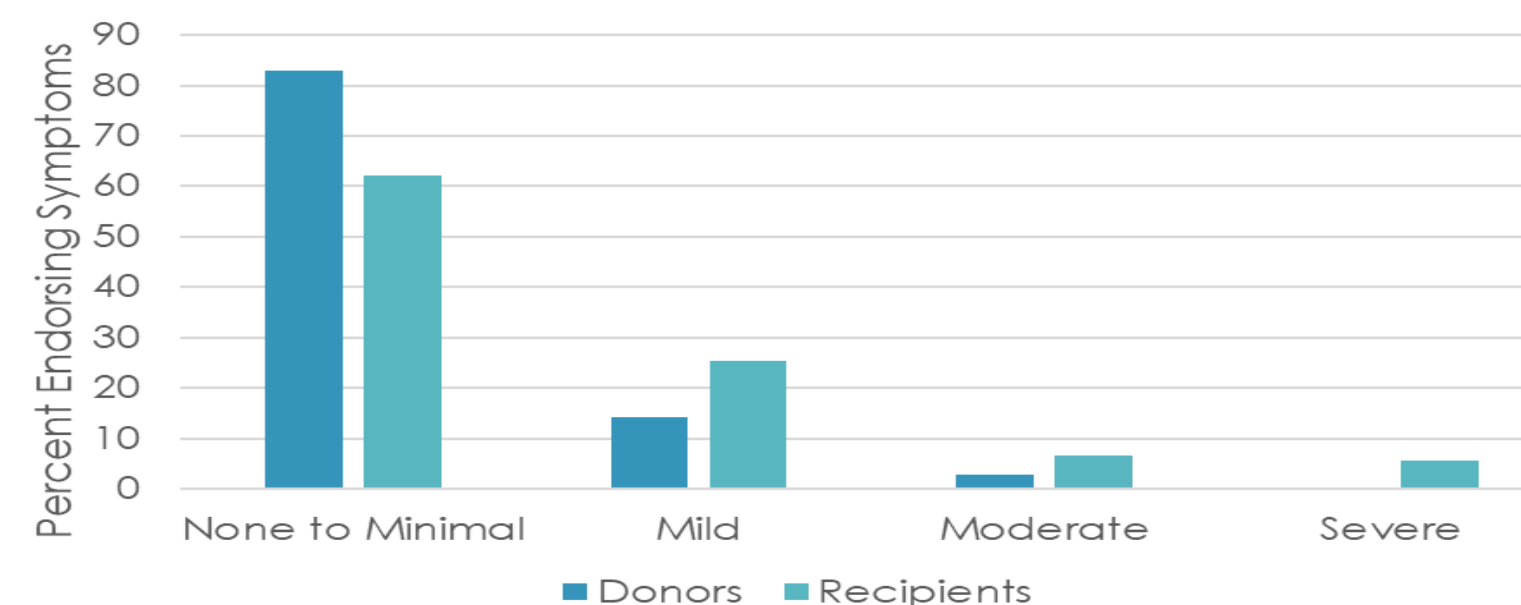
Results

% Endorsing	Donors	Recipients	All
Surgical/Post-surgical Complications	21.62	43.24	37.84
Changes in Well-being	22.22	63.30	53.10
Unexpected Outcomes	21.62	41.44	36.49
Sought Psychological Support	16.22	15.32	15.54
Interested in Psychological Support	21.62	47.27	40.82

Depression Symptom Severity (PHQ-9)



Anxiety Symptom Severity (GAD-7)



Participant Responses

Did you experience any unexpected outcomes following surgery?

"PTSD, self-diagnosed, and feelings of anxiety. I also lost my job just as I was getting my transplant, so there has been quite the adjustment period. I have some serious memory issues that really annoy me."

"The debilitating depression I'm still experiencing with absolutely no help or available resources."

"I wish I had known that the hard part was after the transplant; that the first year would be a constant battle because of the sheer amount of learning that needed to be done. I wish I had known that I would be in another grief cycle."

"Although overall physical health improved, I experienced depression which I was not expecting."

Is there anything you wish you had known prior to surgery?

"How hard depression would hit me."

"Resources for post-surgery mental health."

"I wish that I would have been prepped on what a huge toll a transplant takes on my mental state. I was so stressed about all the meds and constant appointments, the extremely high cost of all the meds and in so much pain but no one understood what I was going through or could give me any comforting advice."

Discussion

- Many donors and recipients report post-surgical psychosocial changes, anxiety, or depressive symptoms and expressed interest in ongoing psychological support.
- Routine psychological follow-up may be a beneficial component of the transplant process. We will meet with the transplant team to discuss post-surgical depression and anxiety screening and dedicated time for mental health follow-up appointments.