THE FIRST RELATED LIVING DONOR KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION AND THE GREEK CONTRIBUTION

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Introduction and Aims

The successful kidney transplantation (KT) between two homozygotic twins performed in Boston in 1954 is widely known. The surgeon Joseph Murray was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine for this outstanding achievement. However, a previous KT at Necker Hospital, Paris in 1952 remains in relative obscurity.

Results

The French group of Necker Hospital led by nephrologist Jean Hamburger and surgeon Rene Kuss made daring advances in clinical and experimental KT during the early 1950s. On Christmas Eve, 1952 the Greek surgeon Nicolaos Oeconomos and the urologist Louis Michon transplanted a kidney from a living donor, Mrs Gilberte Renard, the willing mother of the 15-year old boy Marius. He had sustained a fall injury and his congenitally solitary native kidney had to be removed to control post-traumatic bleeding. The renal allograft functioned well for 22 days when it suddenly ceased producing urine and the boy died 10 days later. Recent histologic review of the original allograft biopsy slides identified lesions compatible with mixed acute cellular and antibody mediated rejection. Of note, Nicolaos Oeconomos embarked on a successful surgical career upon his return to Greece later that decade and is credited with performing the first open cardiac surgery in Greece in 1958.

Methods

We searched through medical textbooks, conference proceedings, journal article databases and Internet search engines for references reporting the first living related donor KT.

Conclusions

The failure of the first living related donor KT had a positive aspect. It made KT pioneers to realize the magnitude of the rejection risk and paved the way for the subsequent attempt at KT between homozygotic twins. The latter remained the norm until the advent of the immunosuppression era.

References