

Introduction

J. Lerut

Twenty years of liver transplantation at Cliniques universitaires Saint-Luc in Brussels, Belgium.

The first liver transplantation in Belgium, and thereby one of the first in Europe, was performed in Leuven by the team of Professor Kestens on June 18, 1969.

The liver transplantation program of the Cliniques universitaires Saint-Luc in Brussels actually started on February 5th 1984 when a young man with end-stage liver failure due to hepatitis B viral infection was transplanted successfully.

Several more patients, transplanted during the same year, are still alive and well twenty years later, with a good functioning graft.

Due to major improvements in surgical techniques, in organ procurement, and in organ implantation, as well as major improvements in perioperative medical care and immunosuppressive treatment, the interest of transplant surgeons, physicians and researchers has shifted towards the long-term results and more especially towards the quality of life of our successfully transplanted liver recipients.

For this reason, in April 2004, an international symposium was organised under the auspices of the European Society of Organ Transplantation and the European Liver Transplant Association (a section of ESOT). The main topics of this symposium were :

- long-term results of liver transplantation in children and adults
- quality of life and compliance after transplantation
- recurrent liver allograft diseases.

Future ways to cope with the ever increasing shortage of allografts, such as split liver transplantation, living related liver transplantation, hepatocyte transplantation and use of artificial liver devices, were also addressed. Particular attention was given to the psychological aspects and follow-up of living related organ transplantation. This was based on the extensive experience in Scandinavia.

All topics have been reviewed by internationally renowned experts in the field.

We hope that this special issue of the *Acta Gastroenterologica Belgica* will be a good companion in the care of liver transplant recipients.

Editor note : *we apologize for publishing the paper by P. Burra, M. De Bona, D. Canova, A. Feltrin, A. Ponton, M. Ermani, A. Brolese, G. Rupolo, R. Naccarato. Longitudinal prospective study on quality of life and psychological distress before and one year after liver transplantation in the former issue of Acta Gastroenterologica, 2005, 68 : 19-25).*
