

Corona virus outbreak - statement of Slovenija-transplant

Ljubljana, 12. 3. 2020

Guidance on Corona Virus for healthcare professionals in Slovenia

Since December 2019, infections with virus SARS CoVid-2, causing Coronavirus disease spread in more than 100 countries around the world. By now, not targeted therapy is known. The virus is highly contagious. Patients might experience from minor, less severe infection to high risk infection of lower respiratory system. Differences in indication for hospitalization can be observed globally. Mortality rate differs across regions. Global estimation is around 3,4 %. In Europe, Italy shows the highest mortality rate (5 %), while in Germany it is less than 0,2 %. Among the most vulnerable are persons with co-morbidities. Special attention in preventive measures should be applied for transplant patients as well.

The number of confirmed cases is very fluid. In Europe numbers are still on the rise. That is why, on the 12 of March 2020, World health organization declared global COVID-19 outbreak as epidemic. By the 8th of March the majority of cases were reported in Italy (more than 7.000 out of 10.000 in Europe). In Slovenia, 57 cases were confirmed by 11. 8. 2020. As Italy is our neighboring country, higher measures of precautions for virus transmission are necessary in Slovenia as well. It is of extreme importance, healthcare workers strictly follow all the infection prevention practices.

Guidance for organ and tissue donation

According to the ESOT statement, the true risk of donor-derived transmission is unclear, while RNAemia was reported in at least 15 % in one case series (for more, please see <https://tts.org/tid-about/tid-presidents-message/23-tid/tid-news/657-tid-update-and-guidance-on-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-for-transplant-id-clinicians>).

In the process of donor evaluation, special attention must be given, if a person was travelling to one of countries with Corona outbreak in the last 21 days. Persons who returned from China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Vietnam should not be considered as donors. According to current knowledge, virus incubation period is between 2 to 14 days. In case of donation, 21 days should be considered to minimize the risks.

Deceased donors

In all cases, when brain death is confirmed and consent for donation is obtained, all eligible donors for organ or tissues must undergo test PCR RNA for virus SARS-CoV-2.

The testing lasts approximately 4 hours, and must be part of standardized process of donor evaluation.

If the test is negative, there is no contraindication for donation. In case the test for virus SARS-CoV-2 is positive, the donation process must be declined and stopped. This is an absolute contraindication. Exceptions can be made in case of high urgent, life threatening conditions of heart and liver transplantation. Responsible doctors need to evaluate each situation. Patients must be notified about the SARS-CoV-2 positive test results and give consent for operation procedure.

Living donors

At the moment we suggest all living kidney donations to be postponed to later dates. In case of any emergency, please contact Danica Avsec.

Contact person for any additional explanation and information: Danica Avsec, MD

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Epidemiological situation is changing rapidly. Slovenija-transplant closely monitors the developing situation on COVID-19 and follows guidelines and instructions of national and international competent authorities. Instructions will be regularly updated according to risk assessment. We recommend following the data and instructions published on:

NIJZ: <https://www.nijz.si/sl/koronavirus-2019-ncov>.

ECDC: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china>.

ESOT: <https://www.esot.org/news/latest-news/esot-statement-covid-19-outbreak>.

EBMT: <https://www.ebmt.org/ebmt/news/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-updated-ebmt-recommendations-8th-march-2020>.

Zavod RS za transfuzijsko medicino: <http://www.ztm.si/novice/ukrepi-pri-krvodajalcih-za-preprecevanje-prenosa-sars-cov-2/>.

Inštitut za mikrobiologijo in imunologijo Medicinske fakultete v Ljubljani: www.imi.si.

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