

OPTN Vascularized Composite Allograft Transplantation Committee

Meeting Summary

November 16, 2022

Conference Call

Sandra Amaral, MD, MHS, Chair

Vijay Gorantla, MD, Ph.D., Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Vascularized Composite Allograft Transplantation Committee (the Committee) met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference on 11/16/2022 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. American Society of Reconstructive Transplantation 2022
2. Update Guidance on Optimizing VCA Recovery Project

The following is a summary of the Committee's discussions.

1. American Society of Reconstructive Transplantation 2022

The Committee discussed different themes and topics presented at the 2022 American Society of Reconstructive Transplantation (ASRT) conference.

Summary of discussion:

A member mentioned that at the ASRT conference, there were discussions about moving VCA to a standard of care and getting insurance coverage. Other important issues were covered at the conference as well, such as proper patient selection.

A member mentioned that the VCA clinical trial network would probably be released soon, which aims to help increase the volume of VCA transplants. The purpose of the clinical trial is to standardize procedures for VCAs. The member expressed that in solid organ transplantation (SOT), although there are general guidelines, transplant centers perform immunosuppression differently. The idea is to create general immunosuppression guidelines for VCA and then run a 4-year clinical trial.

A member asked about some of the issues regarding patient selection. A member replied that the two significant issues with patient selection are unrealistic expectations for transplants and that some patients may not have sufficient social support after the transplant.

2. Update Guidance on Optimizing VCA Recovery Project

The Committee provided feedback on VCA recovery challenges faced by Organ Procurement organizations (OPOs) and transplant programs.

Summary of discussion:

Education

The Chair stated that due to the small volume of patients and the uniqueness of VCA, only specific people are involved with VCA recovery at their program. This includes orthopedics, plastic surgeons, orthopedic physician assistant, kidney transplant nurse practitioner, and kidney transplant program coordinators. The Organ Procurement Organizations mainly interact with the surgical team.

The Chair continued, explaining that the medical team did not have any direct discussion with the OPO; however, there were many dress rehearsals in preparation for the first case. Although the staff had a procedural workflow of what would happen at the start of the process and who would be notified, their transplant program did not have training materials, resources, and educational interactions with the Intensive care unit (ICUS).

Another member agreed with the Chair and had similar experiences where their transplant program does not have public education for VCA recovery; therefore, the surgical and medical team usually meet as one group when preparing for a VCA recovery. The member also expressed that sometimes people at their program are unaware that VCA transplant occurs and recommended more education within programs.

A member stated that the transplant coordinator, an administrative staff, a doctor, and surgeons help with the pre-and post-transplant coordination efforts at their program. Also, their program partners with the OPO early on to understand the procurement process and educate their team.

Another member expressed that they have nurse transplant coordinators at their program. The member shared that some hospital staff are unaware that their transplant programs perform VCAs. Their transplant coordinators attend various conferences, such as the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) and the American Transplant Congress (ATC).

Another member expressed that their program has performed face and uterus transplants and will hopefully have a hand program. This member shared that their VCA programs are growing, but the staff shortage had made this particularly challenging. When performing VCA recovery, there is a lot of coordination involved, and their program does not have a dedicated coordinator. Although VCA has low patient volume, a lot of administrative and educational outreach needs to be completed; therefore, the patient volume is not always equivalent to the amount of work VCA coordinators are responsible for. Moreover, if programs are looking to grow, it is recommended that they have hire dedicated VCA staff.

Another member shared that their transplant program partners with OPOs to perform training procurements to prepare the team. The staffing includes the surgical team and multiple OPO personnel. The Chair mentioned that many transplant teams and individual programs have offered to help mentor other programs that are not as familiar with VCA recovery. The Chair inquired if experienced OPOs would be amenable to helping other OPOs.

Recovery Considerations

The presenter asked the Committee if their programs partner with OPOs to develop VCA recovery plans. A member replied that there are plans in place; however, the plan needs to be flexible because the plan may change depending on what organs are being recovered.

Another member stated that OPO, donor hospitals, and transplant programs should collaborate to develop a VCA recovery plan. There are educational opportunities among the OPO coordinators and surgical teams from multiple transplant centers.

The presenter asked if the Committee has experience with the VCA authorization process and how the process works. A member replied that their program does not have formal literature to give to families, but their program follows the standard authorization procedure.

Next steps:

The Committee will continue their work on Updating Guidance on Optimizing VCA Recovery Project.

Upcoming Meeting

- December 14, 2022

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Sandra Amaral
 - Amanda Gruendell
 - Amir Dorafshar
 - Brian Berthiaume
 - Charlie Thomas
 - Debra Priebe
 - Donald Rickelman
 - Liza Johannesson
 - Christina Kaufman
 - Paige Porrett
 - Stefan Tullius
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Jim Bowman
- **SRTR Staff**
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Tamika Watkins
 - Kelley Poff
 - Lauren Mauk
 - Catherine Parton
 - Krissy Laurie
 - Jesse Howell
 - Sarah Booker
 - Rachel Hippchen