

OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee

Meeting Summary

August 6, 2021

Conference Call

James Pomposelli, MD, PhD, Chair

Scott Biggins, MD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee (the Committee) met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference on 08/06/2021 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. PELD/Status 1B Project Update
2. Redeveloping MELD-Na: The effect of time-varying covariates and correcting for disparities across sex
3. NLRB Subcommittee Update

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

1. 1. PELD/Status 1B Project Update

The Committee received an update on the PELD/Status 1B project.

Summary of discussion:

A member asked about the rationale for the point values based on diagnosis at listing. The presenter responded that zero, five, and ten point values are utilized in current policy. A candidate would be assigned fifteen points for a chronic liver disease (liver- alone and liver- intestine) diagnosis because these candidates are at a higher risk for waitlist mortality. A member referenced a figure which showed that pediatric candidates with metabolic disease get 1B status, but do not look to have a high mortality rate. They asked if the 1B Status for metabolic disease diagnosis has the potential to disadvantage a pediatric patient with a PELD of 24 who may be at a greater risk of mortality. The presenter responded that that this is one of many reasons the Work Group is considering a new MELD/PELD threshold.

A member commented that pediatrics use a very small number of livers out of the adult liver pool each year and suggested, because the number is so small, that pediatric candidates be prioritized ahead of all adults. The member suggested that this may reduce the number of pediatric candidates listed at Status 1B and support removal of the threshold while reserving the Status 1B category for candidates who are at a high risk of mortality. Another member commented that this proposed solution could have negative consequences, such as a stable pediatric candidate receiving an organ before an adult candidate with a high risk of mortality.

Next steps:

The Committee will receive another PELD/Status 1B project update during a future meeting.

2. Redeveloping MELD-Na: The effect of time-varying covariates and correcting for disparities across sex

The Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) presented the results of the Model for End-stage Liver Disease (MELD) data request.

Summary of discussion:

A member asked for clarification about the differences in MELDs when comparing the presented analysis to MELD 3.0. An SRTR representative explained that there are a range of MELD scores and that the mean can change depending upon how the scale is calibrated. The representative continued that the ranges can be aligned with the existing scale. A member asked the representative to comment on the role of albumin. The presenter responded that the impact of albumin is higher in people with lower MELD scores.

A member asked how sex would be defined noting that a small number of patients may not fit into male or female response options. Another member agreed and added that sex, as opposed to gender, would need to be defined because gender can be defined differently. A SRTR representative commented that when comparing sex and height, the biological factor of sex will have a greater impact on women's mortality than height. Another member added that a more appropriate time to add a height variable may be during Continuous Distribution.

Next steps:

The Committee will schedule an additional meeting to further discuss these results.

3. NLRB Subcommittee Update

The NLRB chair provided an update on the work of the NLRB subcommittee.

Summary of discussion:

A member asked if the OPTN would align their language with Liver Imaging Reporting and Data System (LI- RADS) language. The presenter responded that members of the subcommittee will discuss with their programs' radiologists to determine if the OPTN should modify their language to align with LI-RADS.

Upcoming Meetings

- August 20, 2021
- September 3, 2021

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Peter Abt
 - Sophoclis Alexopoulos
 - Diane Alonso
 - Scott Biggins
 - James Eason
 - Alan Gunderson
 - Jennifer Kerney
 - Shekhar Kubal
 - Allison Kwong
 - Ray Lynch
 - Greg McKenna
 - Mark Orloff
 - James Pomposelli
 - James Trotter
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Jim Bowman
- **SRTR Staff**
 - Katie Audette
 - Ray Kim
 - John Lake
 - David Schladt
 - Tim Weaver
 - Andrew Wey
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Matt Cafarella
 - Liz Callahan
 - Julia Foutz
 - Betsy Gans
 - Savannah Holmes
 - Joel Newman
 - Samantha Noreen
 - Leah Slife
 - Niyati Upadhyay
- **Other Attendees**
 - Emily Perito (OPTN Pediatric Transplantation Committee Vice Chair)