

A survey that asks patients about their physical health before transplant may predict how they'll do after transplant

What were researchers trying to learn?

Researchers wanted to learn whether a survey that asks patients about their physical health before a blood and marrow transplant can predict transplant outcomes (results).

Researchers studied about 650 patients who had a transplant and joined an exercise study. About half of the patients in the study had an allogeneic transplant (uses blood-forming cells donated by someone else). The other half of patients had an autologous transplant (uses their own blood-forming cells).

Researchers asked patients to fill out a survey before and at 100 days after transplant. This survey asked about:

- Physical problems or limitations they had with work or daily activities
- How well they could do physical activities, like pushing a vacuum cleaner or walking several blocks
- Their symptoms, like tiredness, nervousness, and sadness

What did they find?

Researchers found that how patients scored on the survey before and after transplant predicted their transplant outcomes. Patients who said they felt better before transplant (for example, had the fewest physical problems) lived longer than patients who didn't feel as well.

Researchers divided the patients into groups based on how they answered the survey. Patients who reported greater levels of physical activity before transplant were more likely to be alive at 1 year after transplant.

Researchers also found that patients whose physical health changed the most after transplant didn't do as well. Patients who experienced greater decline in physical activity after transplant were more likely to die from treatment-related problems.

Important Point:

How patients feel physically before and after transplant affects transplant outcomes.

Why is this important?

Transplant doctors can ask patients how they feel physically before transplant to help figure out how well they might do after transplant. This could help doctors and patients decide whether transplant is the best treatment option.

What else should I keep in mind about this study?

The results of research studies are always limited in what they can and can't tell you. In this study, the researchers only looked at patients who agreed to join an exercise study. Patients who joined this study might be different than patients who didn't join.

Also, the researchers don't know exactly what caused patients who felt worse to do worse after transplant. Those patients might have had more transplant complications, like graft-versus-host disease (GVHD). Or their disease may have come back. The researchers couldn't tell from this study.

Questions to ask your doctor

If you are considering transplant, you may want to ask:

- How long do most patients my age and with my disease live after transplant?
- Is there anything about my health that suggests I might do better or worse after transplant?
- How can I improve my physical health before and after transplant?
- When is the best time for me to have a transplant?

Learn more about

- [This research study](#)
- [Blood and marrow transplant](#)

Source

Wood WA, Le Rademacher J, Syrjala KL, et al. Patient-reported physical functioning predicts the success of hematopoietic cell transplantation (BMT CTN 0902). *Cancer*. 2016 Jan 1; 122(1):91-98. Epub 2015 Oct 6. PMC4707096.

About this research summary

Ground-breaking research into blood and marrow transplant is happening every day. That research is having a significant impact on the survival and quality of life of thousands of transplant patients. But the research is written by scientists for scientists. By providing research news in an easy-to-understand way, patients, caregivers, and families have access to useful information that can help them make treatment decisions.

This information is provided on behalf of the Consumer Advocacy Committee of the CIBMTR[®] (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research[®]). The CIBMTR is a research collaboration between the National Marrow Donor Program[®]/Be The Match[®] and the Medical College of Wisconsin.