

We greatly appreciate your interest in the Northwestern Medicine Comprehensive Transplant Center (CTC). With the leadership of Daniela Ladner, MD, MPH, as Interim Director, our team continues to strengthen the culture of excellence, innovation, and collaboration that is the CTC's hallmark. In their daily work, our scientists and clinicians exhibit an unwavering dedication to accelerating groundbreaking research and delivering life-changing and life-saving patient care. Having performed more than 5,000 kidney transplants and 2,000 liver transplants, as well as more than 3,000 live donor procedures for both kidney and liver, our CTC team members continue to blaze new trails in the field of organ transplantation. They are actively working to address the challenges of organ disease, to develop solutions to the organ shortage crisis, and to advance "high risk-high reward" research that may lead to significant breakthroughs in patient care.

During this especially challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic, our CTC team members are finding new and essential ways to support transplant patients. Among our team's most notable COVID-19-related efforts is a pivotal research study, "COVID-19 and Transplant Patients," which we are pleased to highlight today.

A Key Research Initiative Is Touching Many Lives

Study Purpose and Design

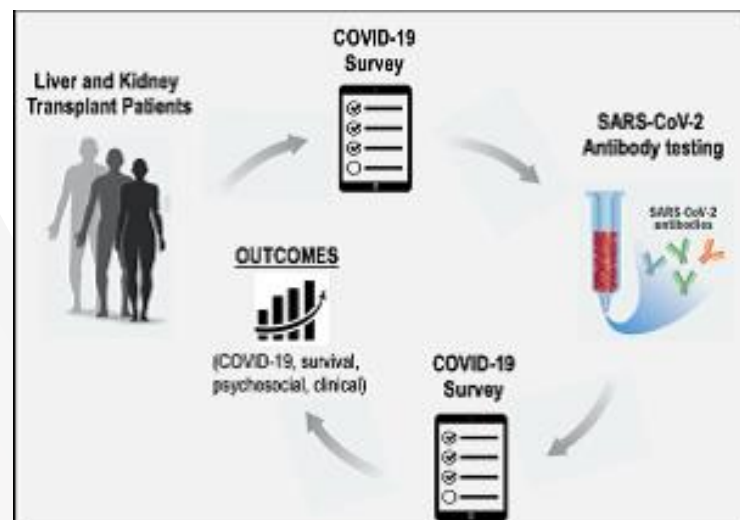
Investigators at the CTC have developed and launched "COVID-19 and Transplant Patients," a study whose goal is to discover the knowledge base, questions, and behaviors, related to COVID-19, among a cohort of transplant patients, over a period of several months. The researchers seek to:

- Enroll individuals who have received, or who are preparing to receive, a kidney or liver transplant.
- Conduct a survey of study participants' understanding of, and concerns about, COVID-19.
- Measure the level of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in study participants' blood. *In general, the presence of these antibodies indicates that a person was infected, at some point in the past, with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.*
- Repeat the attitudinal/behavioral survey after two or three months' time.
- Assess and measure participants' clinical and psychosocial outcomes, and determine the degree to which participants engaged in protective behavior.

Progress to Date

Over the course of the past several months, the research team has enrolled 214 individuals in this study: 139 kidney patients, and 75 liver patients.

- Among these 214 study participants, 182 (or 85%) have completed their initial surveys.
- In late October or early November, the team will begin the SARS-CoV-2 antibody testing process.
- The next step of the study—administering follow-up surveys of participants' COVID-19-related concerns and behaviors—is expected to begin in January of 2021.



Pictured above: The process, or workflow, of the study.

A Spotlight on: Leading-Edge Research at the Comprehensive Transplant Center

- On a continuous basis, throughout every phase of this study, investigators will capture information regarding participants' clinical and psychosocial experiences and outcomes.

Important Notes about Processes and Safety

With regard to potential, future studies related to COVID-19: Our investigators have developed a process to store blood samples that were collected during the hospitalization of COVID-19-positive transplant patients and COVID-19-positive *non-transplant* patients (study "controls"). To ensure the safety and precision of this process, the team obtained approvals from both the Internal Review Board and the Internal Biosafety Committee.

All COVID-19 blood samples are processed and stored in Biosafety Level 2 containment, with Biosafety Level 3 precautions, in the College of American Pathologists (CAP)-accredited biorepository at the CTC. To date, in this biorepository, our researchers have stored 748 longitudinal samples from 49 COVID-19-positive patients. Of these 49 patients, 29 are transplant patients, while the other 20 are non-transplant patients. We look forward to keeping you apprised of our investigators' progress, as they further advance various studies and outreach efforts for the benefit of transplant patients.



The Power of Partnership

As we continue our efforts to shape the future of organ transplantation, philanthropy fuels vital progress that touches and improves countless lives—at Northwestern Medicine and far beyond. Caring supporters help to provide the spark of inspiration that gives rise to studies such as “COVID-19 and Transplant Patients,” as well as many other front-line initiatives. We welcome the opportunity to continue our conversations with you and to discuss, in more detail, how we might work together to ensure that our CTC team continues to open new doors of insight into the needs, experiences, challenges, outcomes, and hopes of transplant patients.



Thank you for your consideration!