

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/asn-action-center/kidney-week-2021-a-look-at-transplants-inequities-more/13074/>

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Kidney Week 2021: A Look at Transplants, Inequities, & More

Announcer:

Welcome to the *ASN Action Center* on ReachMD. On this episode, we're joined by Dr. John Friedewald, a Professor of Medicine and Surgery at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and the Medical Director of Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Dr. Friedewald is here to share his insights on topics covered at the American Society of Nephrology Kidney Week 2021, including monitoring kidney transplants and systemic inequities in the allocation system. Here's Dr. Friedewald now.

Dr. Friedewald:

I think that one of the things I'm really excited about and personally been involved in is the development of biomarkers and non-invasive ways to monitor patients with kidney transplants. For so long, we've been, sort of, flying blindly with either waiting for a very bad thing to happen or doing invasive and risky biopsies to monitor kidneys. And we have seen in the last few years and now, at this meeting, more data coming out on how far we've come with non-invasive biomarkers to monitor for rejection, and I think it's really a "big C" change in how we're going to manage patients and it is an actual step forward towards personalized and precision medicine for all of our patients. And so, it's a very exciting time to be involved in the field of kidney transplantation because I think it's going to be a "before and after" moment where we say, "Well, we really now can manage patients in a whole new way that's safer and better and may ultimately prolong the life of kidney transplants so that we can have a real impact on patients' lives."

Right now, the kidney allocation system has been developed and has evolved over the last few decades. And one of the nice things about organ allocation policies is it aims to be inclusive in terms of public comment and having broad representation from the kidney community and the transplant community on the committees that do the work of changing policy. But it's never perfect and we've seen that disparities and access to transplantation, in particular, persist, particularly in communities of color and low socioeconomic communities. And so, I think that now's the time to start to reform that in ways where we can be more inclusive. And part of that is that we realize there's a continuum of care with kidney disease that starts back with even chronic kidney disease before transplant referral and that even includes how we measure kidney function that may be inequitable. And so, as we start to look at the systemic ways in which there are disparities in access to care and eventually, down the road, access to the transplant waiting list, and then access to transplant organs, I think we can be more inclusive in the way we do that.

And so, I think what's happened in the last year and what's being highlighted at ASN this year are the ways in which there are systemic inequities in access to care and delivery of care.

Announcer:

That was Dr. John Friedewald sharing highlights related to kidney transplantation and allocation from the American Society of Nephrology Kidney Week 2021. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit ReachMD.com/ASN, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening.