The beneficial effect of a journalist’s death on organ transplantation and hepatitis B vaccination

Sir,

We have read the interesting and informative article by Weber et al. about the impact of television on attitudes towards organ donation [1]. We wish to report a personal observation on health and the media.

Hepatitis B infection and a limited number of cadaveric grafts for organ transplantation are well known health problems in Turkey. The population of Turkey is about 65 million and the prevalence of hepatitis B surface antigenaemia is 5–7% among normal population [2].

Nurcan Çağrıoğlu, a journalist, had been diagnosed with acute hepatitis B infection in September 1997 and she had died in October 13 because of fulminant hepatitis. Due to Nurcan Çağrıoğlu’s popularity as a journalist her death ignited many interpretations, and informative programmes about organ transplantation and hepatitis B vaccination began to appear on newspapers and TV channels. Following this incident, the numbers of organ transplantation and hepatitis B vaccination have increased in parallel to the interest in media and public (Table 1).

Table 1. Numbers of cadaveric renal transplantation (data from Transplant Centers Coordination Association) and numbers of sold hepatitis B vaccines (data from International Medical Statistics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cadaveric renal transplantations</th>
<th>Sold hepatitis B vaccines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>36 (before the journalist’s death) plus 16</td>
<td>1 010 900*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2 018 300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Most of these sales were in November and December 1997.

There are indications of an increase in other organ transplantations as well. There may also be other causes for these increments, but we think the major cause was the increased interest by media and public in organ transplantation and hepatitis B vaccination. This observation shows the effect and role of the media on the popularization of community-related health issues.

Widespread discussion of health problems in newspapers and TV programmes may lead to better awareness and perhaps education of people on health issues as well as achieving successful health related campaign activities.

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leucocytes; but stains and cultures for bacteria, fungi and 1. Parry RG, Playford EG, Looke DF, Falk M. Soft-tissue abscess
to that required repeated biopsies for diagnosis. recipient who developed isolated tuberculous pyomyositis,
diagnosis [4,5]. We describe a case of a renal transplant in such that the disease is often disseminated at the time of
infection are often masked by immunosuppressive agents, versus renal transplantation on the survival of elderly uraemic
ally involves a single large muscle, most commonly the Lung Dis.
600 mg daily, isoniazid 300 mg daily, ethambutol 900 mg daily 4. Hussain Z, Naqvi R, Hashmi A, Ha
the soft tissues of the left thigh. She was treated with rifampicin Zealand.

as the initial manifestation of miliary tuberculosis in a renal

population with the general population (5.4 new cases per 100 000
The risk of developing tuberculosis is increased considerably
in renal transplant patients (0.4–1.7%) [1,2] compared

Sir,

Tuberculous pyomyositis is a very rare condition

1. Weber F, Philipp T, Broelsch CE, Lange R. The impact of
television on attitudes towards organ donation-a survey in a
German urban population. Nephrol Dial Transplant 1999; 14:
2315–2318

2. Mustik R, Balik I. Türkiye’de viral hepatitlerin epidemiyolojisi:
Ofset, İstanbul: 1998: 9–39


5. Park SB, Joo I, Park YI et al. Tuberculosis noti
ed on Ziehl Neelsen stain- recipients in Spain.

muscle. Muscle Nerve

7. Indudhara R, Singh SK, Minz M, Yadav RV, Chugh KS.


