

Biology students view live kidney transplant

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Friday, 08 November 2013 13:46 -



Jessica Habe was surprised at the lack of blood.

Bailey Rickertsen was amazed at how fast a transplanted kidney begins working and Drake Brand couldn't believe how quickly the surgery was completed.

Nonetheless all said the viewing of a live kidney transplant, performed at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, was a good learning experience.

Seniors in Maggie Tiller's physiology class recently viewed the surgery and asked questions during the operation along with students from other schools in Nebraska, Kansas, Texas and Ohio.

Before the surgery, students learned about kidneys, how they function and what causes chronic kidney disease.

Students watched the extraction of a healthy kidney from a donor and the transplant of the organ into the body of a recipient.

Typically such a surgery lasts about three hours.

One question asked by the class was the difference between living donor transplants compared to someone who has died.

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Dr. Sylvester Black, who performed the kidney transplant, said surgeons are more meticulous with living donors so they don't injure tissue or other organs.

"It's technically more challenging," he said. "And it's more work to get a kidney (from a live donor) ready for transplant."

Black also said that OSUWMC performs up to 220 kidney transplants a year.

He noted that the size of the kidney isn't as important as it is in heart, lung and liver transplants.

When asked when they know a transplant is successful, Black said almost immediately.

"The kidneys perk up and start making urine," he said. "But it may take weeks for it (the new kidney) to function normally."

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

- In the United States, there are more than 117,000 men, women and children waiting for organ transplants, enough people to fill a large football stadium twice over.
- More than 50% of those waiting are minorities.
- Of the national waiting list, more than 80% are waiting on a kidney transplant.
- Eighteen men, women and children in the United States die each day waiting for an organ.
- Approximately every 10 minutes, another person is added to the waiting list.
- Fewer than 1% of all people will die in a way that allows organ donation to be possible.
- One tissue donor can enhance more than 50 lives.
- One organ donor can save up to eight lives.
- Organs that can be transplanted include the heart, liver, kidney, skin, connective tissue, cardiovascular tissue, lungs, small intestine, pancreas, bone and eye (cornea and sclera).
- You can become an organ donor by signing up at the local department of motor vehicles. Visit www.OrganDonor.gov for more information.

Source: Center of Science and Industry and The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Tiller said she hopes students take away several things from the experience.

"I hope that they would consider organ donation," she said. "It's such a gift to give someone else a chance to extend their life."

Secondly, she'd like them to see the different health fields available such as a donation specialist who has a degree in counseling but works in the health field.

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From the surgery, Tiller said she hopes they see how transplants have advanced and how surgeons can adjust to allow for a new organ in a patient's body.

Habe said she wants to be a labor and delivery nurse and will have to get used to blood like what was shown during the transplant.

"It also helped me know the parts of the body," she said.

Carson Messersmith, who wants to be a cardiothoracic or neurosurgeon, said the transplant provided him time in the operating room.

"It will help me decide what speciality I want to go into," he said.

Rebecca Anderson, who also wants to be a doctor, said the kidney transplant is a procedure she hasn't yet seen during previous shadow experiences.

Jessica Schmidt plans to be a veterinarian and said the opening of a human abdominal cavity is much different than the same procedure on an animal.

She noted that animals have much more fat since humans use their stomach muscles more to stand and walk.

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