

Research paper 13

Descriptive analysis of post-transplant liver biopsies in a recently established liver transplant centre

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Introduction and objectives: The Colombo North Centre of Liver Disease (CNCLD) was established in 2021 with a dedicated liver transplant hospital undertaking both live and cadaveric donor transplants. The objective of the study was to document the demographic characteristics of Sri Lankan transplant patients at the CNCLD and obtain a baseline audit of all post-transplant liver biopsies.

Methodology: All post-transplant liver biopsies reported by the Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine which is a part of the CNCLD were audited for the period from 2021 to May 2024. Details of age, sex, indication for liver biopsy, time period following transplant, and the histological diagnosis were obtained

Results: The patients' age ranged from 1- 61 years (median 12 years). The female:male ratio was 16:15(1: 1.06). The annual number and percentage of post-transplant biopsies was 7/140 (5%), 11/158 (6.96%), 8/223 (3.58%) and 5/74 (6.75%) in 2021, 2022, 2023 and up to May 2024 respectively. Indications for biopsy included elevated liver enzymes, high bilirubin levels, and remission assessment after pulse therapy. The time period following transplant ranged from one day to four years. 18/31(58%) revealed acute rejection. 2/31 (6.4%) showed both acute and chronic rejection. 4/31(12.9% showed no evidence of rejection. 5/31(16.1%) showed other miscellaneous findings (ischemic/hepatitic/cholestatic pattern of injury) and 2/31(6.4%) had features suspicious of recurrence of the original disease with acute rejection. Most biopsies showed a moderate degree of acute rejection.

Discussion and conclusions: The number of transplant-related biopsies showed an increase over three years contributing to a larger proportion of the total biopsies. The main indication was the assessment of transplant rejection, and the commonest diagnosis was acute rejection.

Keywords: post-transplant liver biopsies, transplant centre, audit

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