

A single-surgeon experience of cadaveric organ retrieval: A retrospective review

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Cadaveric organ transplantation in Sri Lanka is a growing field that depends on timely coordination between retrieval hospitals and transplant centers. Understanding the patterns of organ retrieval is critical to optimizing this process. This study presents a single surgeon's experience on cadaveric organ retrieval from a range of hospitals across the country. This is a retrospective review of cadaveric organ retrievals received by a single transplant surgeon. Data on donor age, gender, date of retrieval, referring hospital, and inter-hospital transfer distance were analyzed. A total of 56 organ retrievals were recorded. Of these, 75% of the donors were male, and the mean donor age was 37.54 years (range: 3.5–65 years). Organs were retrieved from 14 different hospitals, with the highest contribution from Colombo (27.5%). The inter-hospital transfer distance ranged from 0 km (within hospital) to 259 km. (Trincomalee-Colombo). The distance from the retrieval hospital to the transplant center was analyzed across different time periods. During the early period (2010–2012), the mean distance was 4.75 km, as organs were primarily accepted from nearby hospitals due to logistical constraints. In the intermediate period (2017–2019), the mean distance increased to 142.84 km, reflecting the establishment of organized retrieval teams and improved manpower. Between 2022 and 2024, the mean distance decreased to 53.11 km, attributed to a growing perception that organs—particularly livers—retrieved from distant locations were more likely to suffer functional impairment. There has been a recent shift toward limiting the acceptance of organs transported over long distances, in an effort to minimize ischemic injury and reduce the risk of graft dysfunction. Given the growing number of recipients on the transplant waiting lists, the establishment of efficient transport systems, as well as necessary steps to increase the number of retrievals, is important.

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