

Media Release

SA Health

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KIDNEY PROGRAM CELEBRATES 100% SUCCESS RATE DURING KIDNEY HEALTH WEEK

Australia's first kidney transition program is celebrating a 100% success rate in preventing kidney failure among teenagers with kidney disease. To date, 12 young adults have graduated from the program with new kidneys, without relapse.

The program, run by the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) and the Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH), uses a shared-care model where children with kidney disease aged between 13 and 18 years of age see a children's nephrologist at the WCH in addition to seeing an adult transplant physician from the RAH.

The model gives children the chance to form strong relationships with their primary physician as well as the specialist who will ultimately care for them in adulthood.

Paediatric nephrologist at the WCH, Dr Sam Crafter, said clinicians were seeing at least one kidney failure a year before the program started in July 2012.

"Our teenage patients were finding it difficult to transition from the paediatric care they had received at the WCH to the adult care they then received at the RAH when they turned 18, and not all were sticking to their medication plan," said Dr Crafter.

"As a result of the program, children are now able to transition more successfully from the care they have received since they were youngsters at the WCH to the care they will receive as adults at the RAH. They are also more supported to self-manage their medication regime, which ensures that their body doesn't reject their transplanted kidney.

"Instrumental to the success of the program is an external kidney clinic for young adults aged between 18-25 years, which helps build on the groundwork established by the WCH and the RAH and keeps young adults engaged in self-care."

RAH transplant physician Dr Robert Carroll said one third of transplanted kidneys have been lost due to non-compliance with medication over the past 20 years in South Australia.

"Every time a child undergoes a re-graft, the body finds it harder and harder to accept the new organ. It is not uncommon for re-graft patients to spend a year on dialysis before receiving their new kidney, which increases their risk of mortality," Dr Carroll said.

"With appropriate support and education, children can expect to get 15-20 years out of their first kidney transplant, and that is the chief goal of the kidney transition program. Kidney Health Week is the perfect time to celebrate the success of the program to date."

Twenty-one-year-old Stephanie Hermsen has been involved in the renal transition program for the past four years. When she was 17 years old she was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease, and last year underwent a kidney transplant.

"The transition program helped me feel more comfortable at the RAH and allowed me to form a relationship with my transplant physician there," said Stephanie.

"I attend the young adult clinic whenever I can and this gives me the opportunity to talk to other people my age who have had a similar experience to me and understand how I feel."

For more information

Call the WCHN Media Line

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Inspired by world-class renal clinics in Oxford and Boulder, Colorado, the program represents a significant collaboration between health networks to achieve the best possible outcomes for patients.

For more information
Call the SA Health Media Line
Telephone: 08 8226 6488



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