

February 20, 2017

Re: Support for Research Related to APOL1 Risk in Kidney Transplantation

The American Society of Transplantation (AST) is an organization of transplant professionals who are dedicated to advancing the field of transplantation and improving patient care by promoting research, education, advocacy and organ donation. The Society is comprised of nearly 3,500 transplant physicians, surgeons, scientists and allied health professionals. While AST policy prohibits submitting letters supporting specific applications, we believe that it is appropriate to comment on which research areas are of high priority based on their potential to impact the success of transplantation.

The Society hosted the APOL1 Consensus Building Meeting on December 17, 2015, in Washington DC with the goals of summarizing the current data regarding the impact of APOL1 on organ donation and transplantation, identifying knowledge gaps, and offering recommendations for practice in living kidney donor evaluation and living and deceased kidney transplantation. The position paper was published in the *American Journal of Transplantation* in February 2017. Ultimately, the goal was to encourage federal scientific organizations and legislators to support additional research and education in this area.

The disparity between those awaiting transplants and the number of available organs is increasing, and this imbalance is greatest among the African American community. Data related to the APOL1 gene raises important questions for the transplant community about how to factor information about this gene into decisions regarding which patients can safely donate and receive organs without decreasing access to transplantation for those that need it most. There remains an urgent need for new research, including prospective analyses of APOL1 genotype effects in African American donors and the recipients of their kidneys. The AST is highly supportive of studies in this area, and happy to provide any assistance in this effort that will potentially impact accessibility of transplant and the safety of both living donors and recipients in the African American population.

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