A Descriptive Study Examining Post Lung Transplantation:

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Background: There are approximately 170 lung transplant operations performed in the UK annually. At Harefield we performed 59 lung transplants in 2013 and assess up to 100 patients per year. For those who progress to transplantation, patients are advised against returning to work until they are 1 year post transplant. Patients often express issues related to work.

Purpose: Clinical outcomes for lung transplant recipients (LTR) are defined in terms of respiratory function tests. Little data regarding quality of life and employment status following LT has been published. The ability to work post LT may represent a good long term outcome of "health" in this population. We investigated patterns of employment within the current LT population in our centre to look at employment status, restricting factors, and support in order to better define the needs of this group.

Methods: A questionnaire was provided to patients as they attended the Transplant Out-Patient clinic between 15th July and 13th September 2013. All data was collected anonymously. 154 questionnaires were given out and 126 were returned, giving a return rate of 82%. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the numeric data.

Results:

Working status. Employed full time 9% (n=13); employed part time 12% (n=16); self employed 6% (n=8); volunteer 7% (n=9); student 7% (n=9); retired 25% (n=35); long term sick leave 14% (n=20); unemployed 20% (n=28).

Restricting factors for work.

"Other" factors limiting ability to work include health and functional issues, variability of health, and impact of transplant (appointments, medical regime, dialysis).

Conclusions:
Occupational status is an important indicator of how well the transplant patient is. Only a small proportion are employed post transplant (34%). The vocational needs of LTR patients are not being fully met. This area needs further research and there is potential for specialist services to meet the needs of this patient group.