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Introduction

Living Kidney transplantation leads to better outcomes for the transplant recipient and is associated with low morbidity and mortality to receptors and donors.

Objectives

This study aims to describe the narratives, motivations and distinctive characteristics of kidney donors, and changes in psychopathology and life quality.

Methods

We evaluated all kidney donors candidates in Hospital São João Centre, between January 2004 and September 2012, using a semistructured questionnaire.

Results

A total of 62 donors candidates were evaluated, all were receptors family, most were non-practicing catholic and few participated in voluntary activities or were blood donors. The decision was spontaneous, the main aim was to improve the health of the family and the negative consequences were devalued. About the candidates in which the donation happened (30.6%), the majority would repeat the decision, they felt more valued and their self-esteem was higher. They took more responsibility for the health of the receptor and they thought that after transplantation the kidney belonged to both. In general, the donation strengthened the relationship with the receptor and didn't affect donor's life quality.

Conclusion

The decision to donate is more dependent on the relationship with the recipient than altruism feelings. After the donation, donors will experience a period of renegotiation of identity (usually with increased self-esteem and enjoyment of life), redefinition of roles (changing activities, multiple roles and feelings of heroism) and changes in the relationship with the receptor (stronger, with feelings of debt and recognition).