

August 12, 2021

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the American Society of Transplantation, which is an organization of over 4000 professionals that care for organ transplant recipients. We also have representation from transplant recipients, organ donors, and families through our Power2Save patient education efforts. We appreciate this opportunity to provide our opinion on third doses of COVID-19 mRNA vaccination for transplant recipients.

There are over 850,000 individuals living with an organ transplant in the United States. Transplant recipients are on lifelong immunosuppression and are vulnerable to severe disease from COVID-19. Both clinical experience and published studies have shown that over 50% of patients that contract COVID-19 require admission to the hospital and mortality rates range from 10-20%.

COVID-19 vaccination is the cornerstone of disease prevention and has been effective at reducing rates of COVID in the general population. However, several studies have now shown that two doses of mRNA vaccine have poor immunogenicity in the transplant population, both with regards to antibody responses and cellular immunity. In addition, severe outcomes have been reported in many vaccine breakthrough cases (Qin et al., Transplantation, 2021). Recent data in transplant recipients including a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial have shown that third doses of vaccine provide a significant increase in anti-RBD response, neutralizing antibody and cellular immunity (Hall et al., NEJM, Aug 11, 2021). Moreover, third doses were safe and well-tolerated in reported studies. In addition, the delta variant has supplanted wildtype virus and now more than ever, robust immunity is important to protect our vulnerable transplant recipients.

Therefore, we request that ACIP strongly consider providing access to third doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for transplant recipients. The evidence is clear that a third dose for transplant recipients provides a significant boost in immunity and as such is likely to reduce COVID incidence and severity in organ transplant recipients.

Sincerely,



John Gill MD
President

AST NATIONAL OFFICE

1000 Atrium Way, Ste 400 • Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
856.439.9986 • Fax: 856.581.9604
info@myAST.org • myAST.org

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

William Applegate, Director of Government Relations
Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP
1155 F Street, NW • Washington, DC 20004
202.258.4989 • bill.applegate@bclplaw.com