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Factors Related to Travel for Transplantation Among U.S. Kidney Transplant Candidates

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In the context of a growing demand for kidney transplantation (KT) and a persistent shortage of organs, some U.S.-listed candidates are seeking KT abroad, a practice called travel for transplantation. Little is known about factors related to travel for transplantation. Using data from the national transplant dataset, 364 adult candidates who traveled abroad for KT were identified and factors related to travel for transplantation were examined. Logistic regression was used to address the aim of the study. Candidates who traveled abroad for KT had greater odds of being male, Asian, Hispanic, college educated, employed, privately insured, and a non-U.S. citizen/non-U.S. resident. Clinically, candidates with a BMI >30, a cPRA >80, and who required >2 years of dialysis had lower odds of traveling abroad a KT abroad. Compared to candidates listed in region 5, candidates listed in region 9 had higher odds of traveling abroad for KT and candidates listed in regions 6,8, and 11 had lower odds of traveling abroad for KT. The findings of this study can be used to inform health care professionals of individuals at highest risk for travel for transplantation, to guide the development of educational interventions that inform patients of the risks and benefits associated with KT abroad, to promote policy development for international travel for transplantation, and to direct further investigation in this understudied but growing area of transplantation.

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