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### **Bilateral renal cell carcinoma and kidney transplantation – how long should we wait?**

Received: 3 March 1994  
 Accepted: 15 March 1994

Sir: We wish to report a follow-up on case 2 described in the article by Wiggins et al. [2].

This 44-year-old man had undergone bilateral nephrectomies for renal cell carcinoma in 1989. After extensive investigation to exclude the presence of overt residual tumour, the patient received a cadaver allograft and, at the time of publication, was well without evidence of tumour recurrence. He remained well until December 1993, when he presented with a short history of abdominal pain and a mass in the abdomen. Ultrasound demonstrated a large liver with numerous focal lesions; fine needle biopsy of one of these revealed malignant cells consistent with an adenocarcinoma. He also complained of some numbness of his lower lip and pain in the jaw; a radiograph of the mandible revealed lytic lesions which, on biopsy, were due to metastatic spread of a renal cell carcinoma. He rapidly deteriorated and died 2 weeks after presentation. A postmortem was refused on religious grounds.

Professor Penn, in his invited comment on this article, concluded that he firmly believes that a 2-year waiting period for patients with symptomatic renal carcinomas is reasonable for most patients [1]. The subsequent course in our patient would support this. However, this patient was given just over 4 years of good quality life with a functioning graft before presenting with multiple metastases and a short terminal illness. This has to be weighed against a 2-year wait on dialysis in an anephric state to determine whether the residual tumour would have revealed itself, and if it did he would then most certainly have remained on dialysis.

### **References**

1. Penn I (1993) Kidney transplantation in patients previously treated for renal carcinomas. *Transpl Int* 6: 350
2. Wiggins C, Pontin AR, Manas D, Swanepoel CR, Cassidy MJD, Kahn D (1993) Renal transplantation in patients with bilateral renal carcinoma – how long should we wait? *Transpl Int* 6: 348–349

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