

Sentinel Study Ireland

What is the aim of this study?

The aim of this study is to find out if using a Sentinel Skin Flap (SSF) to detect organ rejection earlier is a helpful and acceptable approach for transplant patients.

What is organ rejection?

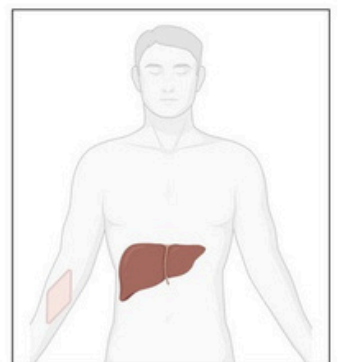
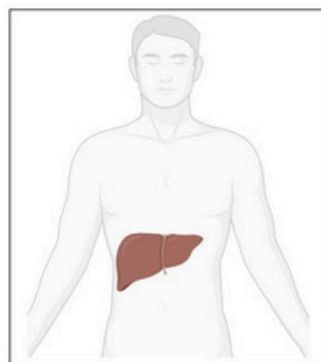
When someone receives a new organ — like a liver, pancreas, or kidney — their body's immune system can sometimes see the new organ as "foreign" and try to attack it. This is called rejection. If not treated early, rejection can cause serious damage to the transplanted organ.

What is a Sentinel Skin Flap?

This is a small patch of skin, about the size of two fingers and shaped like an eye, that comes from the same donor as your new organ. It is placed on your forearm (or another suitable area) at the same time as your transplant surgery. This skin is from the same donor patient as the donated organ and therefore it reacts in the same way as your new organ if your immune system starts to reject it. The difference is that rejection shows up on the skin as a rash, which can be seen much earlier and more easily than inside the body.

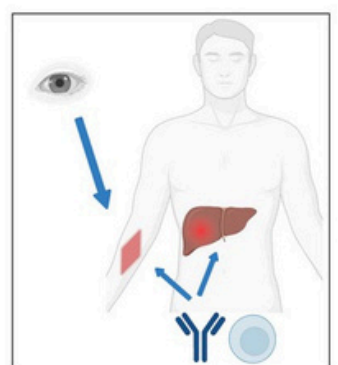
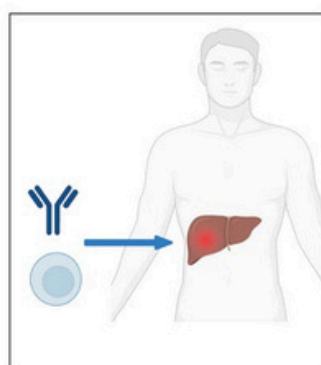
How is the skin flap used?

If a rash appears on the skin flap, your doctors can take a small, painless sample (biopsy) of the skin to check what is happening. If they confirm that your immune system is reacting, they can start treatment quickly - often before any damage happens to your new organ.



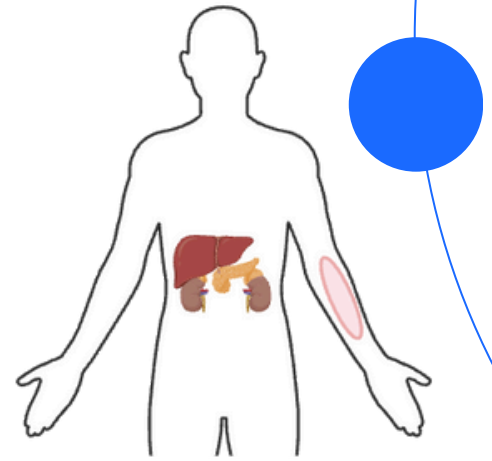
Why is this important?

This early warning may also help reduce the amount of anti-rejection (immunosuppressive) medication you need and the number of rejection episodes you may encounter, which overall may improve your organ and lifetime survival.



What will happen during the study?

All participants receive a liver, pancreas or kidney transplant. Half of the patients are randomly selected to also receive a sentinel skin flap from the same donor. All participants are monitored regularly for a year. We will collect basic information such as your name, contact details, and medical records to conduct the study. Test results and any biopsy samples will be used to study rejection and inflammation markers. You will also be asked to complete questionnaires about your health and well-being at different stages of the study.



Who can take part?

Patients listed for liver, pancreas or kidney transplants at St Vincent's University Hospital are invited to participate. Participation is voluntary and does not affect care. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What are the risks?

While the risks are minimal, you may experience mild pain or discomfort at the site where the skin flap is placed. There is a very small risk that the flap might need to be removed for medical reasons. Other risks include mild irritation or infection at the flap site, but these are manageable. If you no longer wish to keep the flap, it can be removed under local anaesthetic, usually as a day procedure.

Who is running the study?

The study is led by Prof. Roisin Dolan, consultant plastic and reconstructive surgeon at St. Vincent's University Hospital.

What happens to data and samples?

Data and samples are stored securely at St Vincent's University Hospital. All information collected in this study will be kept confidential. Your personal details will be linked to a unique participant ID, so no one outside the research team will know your identity.

Where can I find the outcome of the study?

Upon completion results of the study will be published on www.sentinelstudy.ie

Contact us for more information on the study: sentinelstudy@svhg.ie