

# Wait times for pediatric heart transplants longer during pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic was associated with increased waiting list

times among pediatric patients awaiting a heart transplant (HT) in the United States, according to a research letter published online Oct. 7 in *JAMA Network Open*.

John Iguidbashian, M.D., from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Aurora, and colleagues used data from the United Network for Organ Sharing to evaluate if the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with increased waiting list times among pediatric U.S. HT recipients. Wait times were compared for November 1, 2018, to February 28, 2020 (prepandemic group; 626 patients), and from March 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021 (pandemic group; 610 patients).

The researchers found that pandemic HT recipients had significantly increased mean waiting list times (157.4 days) versus nonpandemic HT controls (126 days; mean difference, 32 days). Waiting list survival remained similar between the groups. Despite longer wait times, post-HT recipient and graft survival were maintained among pandemic and nonpandemic HT recipients. There were significant mean decreases observed in postoperative length of stay among [pandemic](#) HT recipients (31 days) versus nonpandemic HT recipients (40 days; mean difference, -9 days).

"Survival and quality of life among children awaiting HT will depend on a collaborative commitment to standardized decision making and critical outcomes analyses," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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