Racial, gender disparities observed in heart transplant recipients with COVID-19 infection

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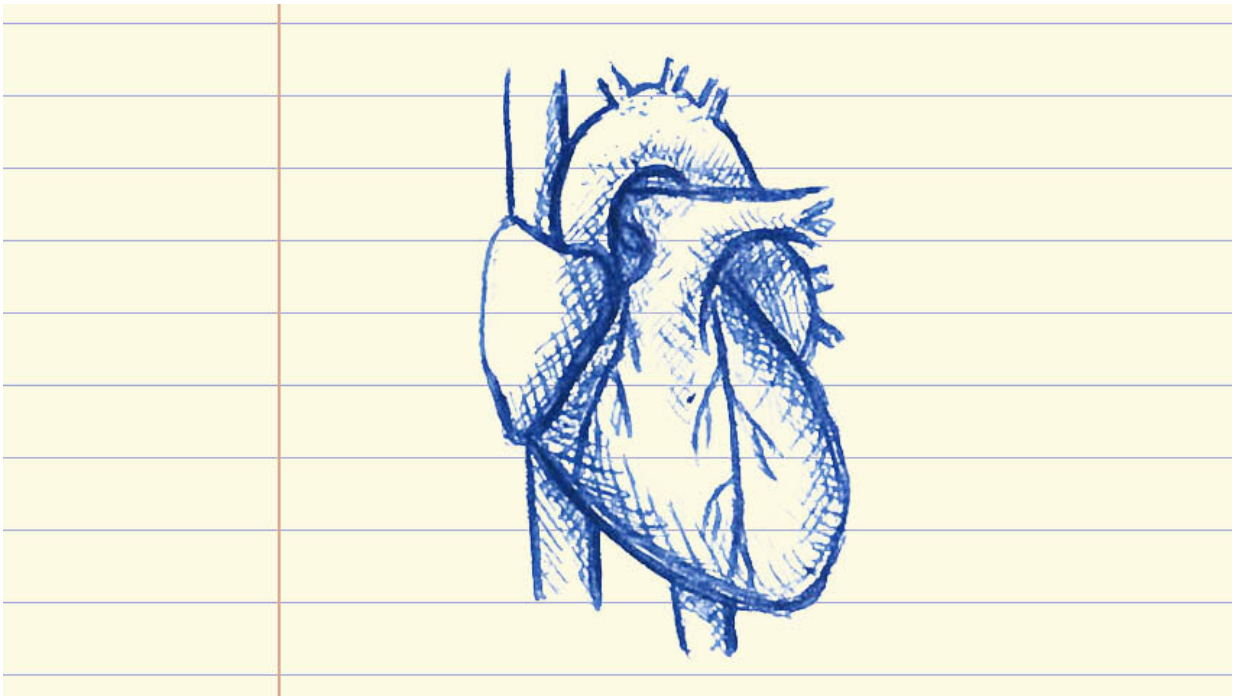

Credit: Stephanie King

Physician-scientists specializing in heart failure wanted to know: if their heart transplant patients contract COVID-19, would they have a different experience than the general public or others who are also immunosuppressed?

A team of Michigan Medicine Frankel Cardiovascular Center researchers, led by Matthew Konerman, M.D., identified 13 patients who had a previous heart transplant and were admitted to one of two hospitals in southeast Michigan in March or April for COVID-19 symptoms. All were black males.

"Despite immunosuppression, the clinical presentation and laboratory markers of disease severity showed similarities to what has been observed in the general population," says first author Scott Ketcham, M.D., an internal medicine resident physician. "However, almost half were critically ill and there was a higher rate of mortality than described among non-heart transplant recipients admitted with COVID-19."

The researchers recommend further research with a focus on racial and gender disparities in COVID-19 and on the identification of prognostic markers, treatments and appropriate immunosuppression management for patients with heart transplant with COVID-19.

More information: Scott W. Ketcham et al, Coronavirus Disease-2019 in Heart Transplant Recipients in Southeastern Michigan: A Case Series, *Journal of Cardiac Failure* (2020). DOI: 10.1016/j.cardfail.2020.05.008

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