

Georges Needs a Kidney Part 5

In my quest to help my friend Georges receive a transplanted kidney, I am nearing a significant marker. I just finished a nuclear stress test and an echocardiogram, both intended to insure that my heart is strong enough to withstand the elective surgery of kidney donation. I passed, in fact it seems I passed with a healthy margin. And so the journey that began at the beginning of March with the question "could I be a kidney donor" has finally arrived at "yes". In all of the previous articles that have described this journey, I have tried to convey what seems to me to be the extreme care used to determine the answer to this question. For most of my life I have had fortunately little contact with the medical community, especially professionally. I know many in that community socially and I've had a few opportunities to eaves drop on their "shop talk" to compare it to other professions, but not enough to really understand. I think what makes my experience so different is the realization that of all the people who go into a hospital on any given day, the vast majority are there that day because their diminishing health demands it. Of the few who go in for some form of "elective" procedure or surgery, they are there to improve their health or quality of life in some way and have only chosen the day. I am a part of a very small minority who has elected to undergo a surgery that if totally successful will only do no measurable harm to my health. What it will do of course is extend life and its quality for at least one other person. So while this procedure is not unique, it is much more rare that it would be in a perfect world.

So while some of the tests I underwent were intended to determine the quality of my kidneys for the potential recipient, most were meant to ensure that the risk to my own health is as small as is humanly possible. That part of the journey is now complete, except of course for the Multi-disciplinary Committee review panel, which will be in a few weeks. One last look, then Georges and I get entered into the matched pair list and the waiting begins. We'll see where it goes from here.

