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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

The recent interesting article by Seoane et al describes the results of administering the 6-minute walk test to lung transplant patients.[1] Although the test was not predictive of survival, a trend suggested worse outcomes in those having lower walk distances at 6 months. Have the authors considered coupling the results of the 6-minute walk test with another validated measure of physical function, such as the Short Form-36 instrument?[2] The combination of the two measures could provide enhanced predictive power.

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REFERENCES

1. Seoane L, Alex S, Pirtle C, et al. Utility of the 6-minute walk test following lung transplantation. *Ochsner J.* 2010;10(4):227-230.
2. Tanikella R, Kawut SM, Brown RS Jr, et al. Health-related quality of life and survival in liver transplant candidates. *Liver Transpl.* 2010;16(2):238-245.

Authors' Reply

We agree with Dr Re's comments that coupling the results of an objective measure such as the 6-minute walk distance with other quality of life measurement tools may increase the predictive value of the test. Tanikella et al[1] found that lower scores on the Short Form-36 survey in patients with end-stage liver disease being considered for liver transplant were associated with increased mortality despite adjustments for age, gender, Model for End-Stage Liver Disease score, and liver transplantation. Our study only looked at patients who had undergone successful lung transplantation and had much lower predicted mortality as a cohort. Nevertheless it is reasonable to assume that combining both tools may be helpful. In addition, using other parts of the 6-minute walk test such as desaturation during the test may also improve the predictive value. In the future, we will combine factors such as desaturation and reported dyspnea during the test with distance walked as a predictive tool. In addition, we have noted a significant improvement in distance walked up to the first year post–lung transplant. The change of distance over time may be another helpful predictive tool.

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REFERENCE

1. Tanikella R, Kawut SM, Brown RS Jr, et al. Health-related quality of life and survival in liver transplant candidates. *Liver Transpl.* 2010;16(2):238-245.