

## Organ procurement risks raise concerns

Since 1990, five plane crashes related to organ procurement have occurred, four of which resulted in 10 deaths. After a crash in 2007 claimed the lives of several University of Michigan transplant team members and their pilots, Michael Englesbe, MD, an Associate Fellow of the College, and his colleagues in the university's transplant department began to examine some of the hazards associated with organ procurement and to seek solutions to those problems. The results of an organ procurement survey conducted last year and sent to all members of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons are reported in the March issue of *Surgery News*, the official newspaper of the American College of Surgeons.

The survey is the only source of systematically collected data on the dangers of organ procurement travel, according to Dr. Englesbe. The survey findings confirmed existing impressions about the generally unsafe conditions inherent in organ procurement: bad weather, night travel, and the sense of urgency. "Most of the respondents (87 percent) said they simply do not feel very safe, especially when flying. And there was a broad consensus that there must be a better way to do it," he said.

Dr. Englesbe is the lead author of two unpublished papers on the topic and will participate in a seminar to be held this coming spring with surgeons, reimburse-

ment experts, and air medical transport representatives. Dr. Englesbe said that a goal of this symposium will be to produce a white paper that may then be used to guide the development of national policy

on safety standards for organ procurement activities.

To learn more about the survey and changes in organ procurement practices, read the March issue of *Surgery News* at <http://www.facs.org/surgerynews/>.

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