Word for Word

Transplantation or transplant: The ins and outs of correct usage

Transplantation and transplant refer to a procedure in which “an organ or tissue [is] taken from the body for grafting into another area of the same body or into another individual,”¹ a procedure in which “a patient receives healthy stem cells (blood-forming cells) to replace their own stem cells that have been destroyed by treatment with radiation or high doses of chemotherapy,”² or the fields of medicine that involve such procedures. Although transplantation has traditionally been the more commonly used word, especially to describe the fields of medicine, use of transplant is increasing.³

Examples:

The study was open to patients who had undergone allogeneic stem cell transplantation.

Their findings confirmed an increased risk of malignancy after solid organ transplant.

She was a pioneer in bone marrow transplantation.

Conference participants will discuss current issues in stem cell transplant.

Transplant can also mean a specific instance of a procedure.

Example:
The surgeon performed a liver transplant.

A *transplant* can also be an organ or tissue that is transferred, but the American Medical Association (AMA) style guide advises authors to use *graft* or to name the organ or tissue instead.³

**Not recommended:** We examined rates of transplant survival after liver transplant.

**Recommended:** We examined rates of graft survival after liver transplant.

Whereas *transplant* can be used as a count noun (a noun naming something that can be counted, like *cells*) or a noncount noun (a noun naming something that cannot be counted, like *oncology*), transplantation should only be used as a noncount noun. In other words, authors should not refer to “a transplantation” or “transplantations”.

**Correct:** She underwent bone marrow transplantation 2 months before presenting to our clinic.

**Incorrect:** The surgeon performed a kidney transplantation.

**Incorrect:** All of the patients had stem cell transplantations.

*To transplant* is a transitive verb, and its use is straightforward: organs, tissues, and cells can be transplanted, but patients cannot be transplanted.

**Correct:** Surgeons transplanted the donor liver into the recipient.

**Incorrect:** The patient was transplanted with a new liver.

References
