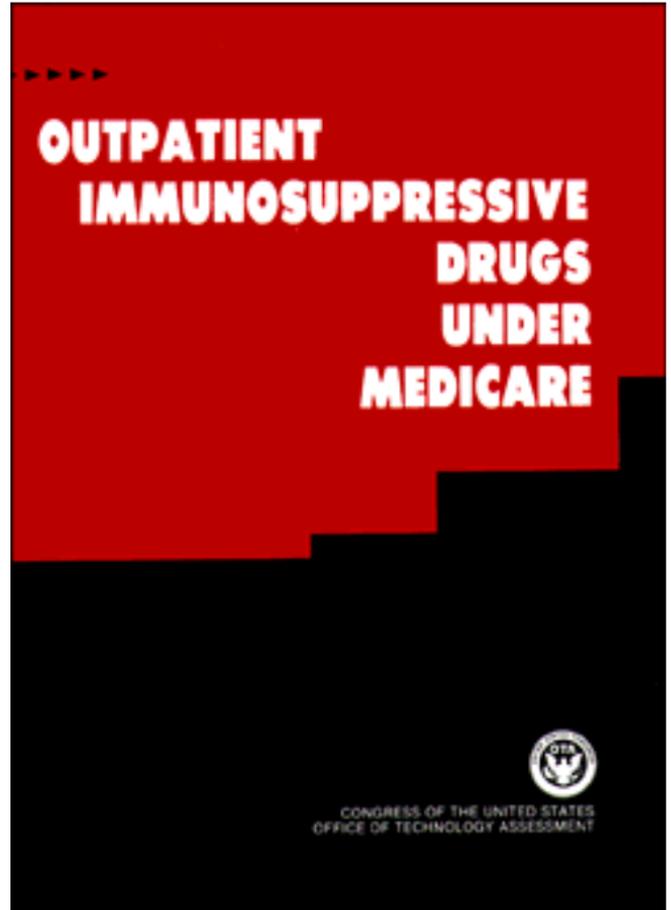


*Outpatient Immunosuppressive Drugs
Under Medicare*

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Foreword

Of all the astonishing achievements of modern medicine, the ability to successfully transplant a living organ from one human being to another is perhaps one of the most awesome. Immunosuppressive drugs are one of the spectrum of technological advances that have made organ transplants an everyday phenomenon. At the same time, however, transplant recipients' needs for these drugs have presented Medicare with a continuing policy dilemma, because Medicare does not usually pay for outpatient prescription drugs.

In 1984, the year after cyclosporine made its debut onto the health care market, OTA reported to Congress on the likely benefits of the drug for Medicare kidney transplant recipients. The present report, requested by the Senate Committee on Finance in the wake of the repeal of the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act, examines Medicare's current immunosuppressive drug coverage dilemma and the policy tradeoffs it entails for the 1990s.

OTA reports would not be possible without the assistance and input of a wide variety of individuals from both the public and the private sectors. OTA staff and contractors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the many people who provided data, clarified facts, presented views, and reviewed the drafts of this report. The final responsibility for the content of the report rests with OTA.



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