



THE TIMES OF INDIA

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Family donates dead relative's bones to AIIMS

Kounteys Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: A day after TOI published a report pointing to AIIMS bone bank's severe shortage of bones, a family from Ashok Vihar came forward and donated all the bones of a deceased relative.

On Saturday, TOI had highlighted how lack of awareness and religious sentiments were preventing people from pledging their bones.

"We read in TOI about the crisis the bank was facing and how it was left with just a few bone parts. That was our inspiration. We, therefore, decided to donate both the lower limbs of my brother," Ashok Sharma told TOI.

Ashok's 68-year-old brother Subhash Sharma died on Sunday after a brain hemorrhage at Sunder Lal Jain Hospital in North Delhi. The body was then transferred to AIIMS where the lower limbs were donated to the bank.

The patient's heart valves and eyes too were donated.

Orthopaedic surgeon Prof R Malhotra, who started the bank at AIIMS, said: "The TOI report has really helped the bank. In just one day, we received a whole set of bones which will benefit at least 15 needy patients. We took both Mr. Sharma's pelvic bones, thigh bones, shin bones, the knee caps and attached tendons."

Ashok Sharma said Indians need to wake up to organ donation. According to

him, in death, people can help others. "My sister-in-law was saved by a 21-year-old girl in Canada who donated over 60% of her liver to save her," he pointed out.

TOI had reported how a 62-year-old dead man had given a fresh lease of life to the country's only full fledged bone bank on December 26. Sunil Grover (name changed), who died that day following heart failure at AIIMS, had

donated all his bones to the institute's bone bank.

This was the bank's first donation in nearly two years. The last time AIIMS received a bone donation was on January 12, 2007.

"Mr. Grover's and Mr. Sharma's donation will help 30 patients in need of hip and knee

Replacement surgery," Dr. Malhotra said.

Globally, bone is the second most commonly transplanted tissue, after blood. However, in India, since its inception in 1999, the bone bank at AIIMS has recorded only nine cadaver donations – six males and three females.

Over 250 patients have already benefitted from the bank.

Over 20% of patients undergoing complex surgeries tumour surgeries, failed replacements, spinal surgery and massive bone loss following trauma, require bone transplant.

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