



THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUSIVE OF DELHI TIMES AND TIMES PROPERTY | TIMESOFINDIA.COM | EPAPER.TIMESOFINDIA.COM

Organ donation may become easier Swap Between Willing But Incompatible Donors May Be Made Legal

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: Swapping of vital organs between willing but incompatible donors may soon become legal in India. Once implemented, it will greatly help patients who have relatives willing to donate but are unable to do so because their organs are medically incompatible for the recipient.

The current rule restricts organ transplantation to people having blood relationship (father, mother, son, daughter, wife, husband, sister and brother), near and distant relatives and those having love and affection towards the patient.

Even though this is just one of the recommendations made by a six member committee appointed by Delhi HC to look into changes needed in the human organ transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994, health ministry officials say this provision will definitely be implemented within two months.

The other recommendations that the ministry is thinking of implementing include launch of a National Organ Transplant Programme (NOTP to promote cadaver donations, announce benefits for live donors like a 505 discount on second – class rail tickets, lifelong free medical check-up and care in the hospital where organ donation took place, a customised life insurance policy of Rs. 2 lakh for three years with one-time premium to be paid by the recipient in case of a mortality, and a preferred status in organ transplantation waiting list if the next-of-kin of a brain-dead donor requires organ transplantation in future.

Blood relations will also not have to pass through a screening authority anymore and undertake several tests. Simple documents like the birth certificate will be enough.

The ministry plans to set up five regional Organ Retrieval and Banking Organizations, one each in north, south

east, west and central India, which will lead to a fair and equitable distribution of organs across the country. At present there is only one national level ORBO at the AIIMS.

Also, when the proposed donor or recipient or both are foreigners, the ministry plans to make it mandatory for a senior embassy official of the country of origin to certify the relationship

between the donor and the recipient. All diagnostic labs carrying out tests need to identify claim by kin before donating organs will have to be accredited by the National Accreditation Board of Laboratories.

Speaking to *TOI*, a health ministry official said: “Wider consultation is needed to finalise the recommendations that will make organ transplantation easy for genuine patients. But some recommendations will surely be approved. We are making the committee’s report and suggestions

public. Our partner, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, will collect the suggestions/objections made by the general public and all stakeholders over the next 30 days. A national conference will then finalise the amendments, which will be implemented in two months time.”

According to the recommendations made by the committee, whose members included the health secretary, director-general of health services, head of surgery of AIIMS, Harsha Jauhari from Ganga Ram hospital, the secretary of IMA, and HC advocate Sanjay Jain, all hospitals must have a liaison officer who will explain to relatives of brain dead patients the merits of cadaver organ donation. They have to also report to ORBO and maintain a record of all brain dead patients in India.

NOTP will also involve religious leaders to sensitise the community about cadaver donations and also include the idea of organ donation in the school curriculum in order to bring awareness among the youth.

**LIFE
LINE**