

Country's first domino kidney transplant trips over legalities in Rajasthan

Five kidneys, zero transplants

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Mumbai: Doctors in Mumbai are waiting to make history with the country's first ever 'domino' kidney transplant (see box), that will involve five donors and five recipients. However, the Rajasthan government's playing spoilsport.

Of the five donor-recipient pairs involved in this initiative, one pair is from Rajasthan. They haven't been granted permission to go ahead with the transplant by the State Authorisation Committee, a body mandated to clear such transplants to prevent the illegal trade of organs.

The Rajasthan panel is hung up on a technicality. "The committee found that the Supreme Court guidelines say nothing about the domino procedure. Hence permission was denied," says Dr Randhir Rao, coordinator of Rajasthan's State Authorisation Committee.

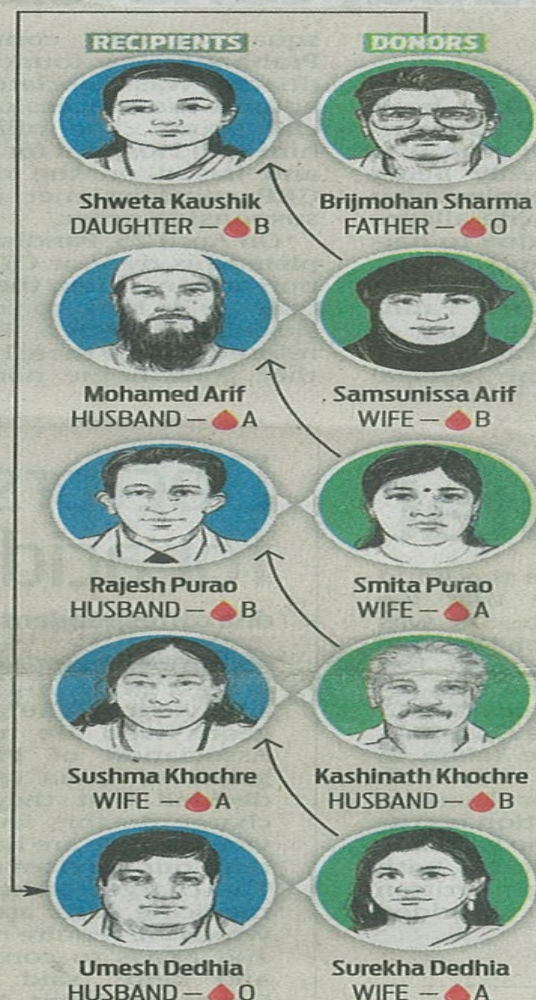
Thus, the entire plan to save five lives is now stalled.

Legal issues are involved in organ donation cases whenever the organ donor and recipient are not related. Since the transplant was to be conducted in Mumbai — at Hinduja Hospital, Bombay Hospital and Hiranandani Hospital — and since four of the five donor-recipient pairs are from Maharashtra, permission of the State Authorisation Committee was necessary and has been obtained. This permission for the four donor-recipients has been assured and will be granted formally next week. For an organ transplant, it is necessary that the blood and tissue of the donor and recipient match. When that doesn't happen, the domino transplant is resorted to. turn to p7

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Tracing the domino effect



WHAT IS A DOMINO KIDNEY TRANSPLANT?

For a transplant, it is necessary that the blood and tissue of the donor and recipient match. When they don't, the domino procedure is resorted to. In this procedure, donor of one pair donates the kidney to the recipient of another pair. The transplant is then carried out in a series, till the last donor in the chain donates to the first recipient in the line up (see illustration).

● New kidney exchange registry to help in the transplant process

This wife-swap saved their lives

Santosh Andhale

It took 48 hours for four couple to donate and exchange kidneys through Swap transplant. The curative surgery was unique because the couples did not have any compatible kidney donor within their family and thus had to resort to The Apex Swap Transplant Registry (ASTRA). Through ASTRA, the registered patients were able to meet suitable donors.

The transplant procedure was done from Tuesday to Thursday; two of these procedures were done at Hiranandani Hospital and one each at Bombay Hospital and Hinduja Hospital.

The four couples — Kaushalyadevi and Benula Prasad, Shrirang and Devyani Belgaonkar, Anil and Kiran Singh and Swapnil and Vandana Sakpal — wanted to donate their kidneys to their partners but were unable to do so because of the blood group variation.

During this transplant process Benula Prasad was the only husband who donated a kidney, the rest were all women.

The swap transplant procedure is resorted to these patients. Mismatch between a donor and recipient because of varying blood groups or tissue mismatch is often a problem faced in case of kidney transplants. In such cases, swap transplantation is a viable option. If there are two such pairs of kidney donor-recipients, and if the kidney of one does not match with that of the recipient of the other pair and vice-versa, it can lead to successful swap transplantation.

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Between Jan 2011 and July 2012, 68 donor-recipient pairs were registered within ASTRA, 25 of which were successfully matched for a swap — Dr Vishwanth Billa, Nephrologist, Bombay Hospital



ASTRA procedure. Mismatch between a donor and recipient because of varying blood groups or tissue mismatch is often a problem faced in kidney transplants. In such cases, swap transplantation is a viable option.

Kidney swap refusal shocks Maha docs

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Rajasthan government's Thursday decision to deny permission for to one of the five recipients to undergo the domino kidney transplant has surprised many in the medical fraternity in Maharashtra and is likely to also put the lives of the other recipients at risk.

Dr Randhir Rao, the coordinator of the Rajasthan state authorisation committee for kidney transplant permissions said, "The committee denied the permissions because it could not find any thing mentioned about the domino procedure in the Supreme Court guidelines."

Rajasthan's refusal has left many in the medical fraternity surprised. Dr Pravin Shingare, the joint director, directorate of medical education and research in Maharashtra, who heads the committee on permissions for kidney transplants in Maharashtra,

It is a routine procedure in the US and the success is widely reported in journals. I don't know why the Rajasthan government has denied permission

—Jatin Kothari

said, "How can anyone deny permission in such cases? The word domino has not been mentioned in the guideline (Supreme Court) because when the law was enacted, no such case was in front of the committee. They should permit the domino kidney transplant as this is the first in India and will benefit five lives:

"It is a life-saving gesture. There is no exploitation. Had such a case come to us, we would have granted permission on humanitarian grounds," he added. Dr Gustad Davar, medical director at Hinduja Hospital and chairman of Zonal Transplantation Coor-

dination Committee (ZTCC) said, "Families will greatly benefit after the transplant. Considering the seriousness of the case, the concerned authorities should have allowed the procedure."

Dr Jatin Kothari, Nephrologist at the Hinduja Hospital, said, "It is a routine procedure in the United States, and success of the procedure has been reported in several journals. I don't know why the Rajasthan government has denied permission."

In the past, the refusal of permission by the authorities to perform domino kidney transplant has proved fatal.

In 2012, one of the five recipients, from Andhra Pradesh, died while waiting for the permission from the state government. The death of that one recipient resulted in the entire procedure getting stalled and four other patients suffering.

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Credit goes to docs for 1st global kidney swap

It took 1 full year to clear legal hurdles on swap involving India, Kenya patients

Santosh Andhale @SantoshAndhale

A day after the first kidney swap transplant was conducted between patients from two different countries, doctors said that both recipients were doing fine. However, more than a clinic challenge, doctors said the legal process was a more daunting task in this case.

On Tuesday, Ann Githinji donated her kidney to Aarif Khokhar, a man from Rajasthan. At the same time, in a reciprocal move, Aarif's wife Sabira donated her kidney to Ann's sister Esther. The swap transplants were carried out at two city hospitals. This swap transplant, the first of its kind in the country,



(From left) Ann Githinji, Aarif Khokhar, Sabira Khokhar and Esther Githinji

dragged on for almost a year as it involved a host of legal tangles.

Nephrologist at Hinduja Hospital, Jatin Kothari, said it was the first case in his career where an Indian patient has donated a kidney to a foreigner and vice versa. "Medically, this swap transplant was not challenging but the hitch was in getting permission from the government. We almost spent a year and many people chipped in to help sort matters out this issue,"

said Dr Kothari.

Among those who pitched in include medical director of Hinduja Hospital, Dr Guntad Davar, state's former top bureaucrat Arun Borigirwar, joint director of the directorate of medical education and research Dr Pravin Shingare.

Doctors explained that the Maharashtra State Authorisation Committee's nod was required as the transplant process was to be conducted at two hospitals - Hin-

duja and BSES. The panel had sought a no-objection certificate from the states of Rajasthan and Maharashtra. A no-objection certificate was also required from the Kenyan Embassy. The Rajasthan state government was not keen to issue the certificate due to legal issues involving organ donors not related to the recipient.

Dr Kothari said that prior to the transplant, Esther had difficulty passing urine. "A day after the pro-

cedure, it was not the same case," he said, adding that the level of serum creatinine in her body is now within the normal range.

Serum creatinine is an indicator of kidney function. A high level indicates kidney dysfunction.

Esther, a psychology graduate, is elated that life was soon limp back to normalcy for her. "Finally, it's happened," she said, the ring of joy evident in her voice. "At one point, we had almost given up as

our governments refused to give permission for the first such swap. But doctors kept our hopes afloat. I'm looking forward to a normal life now."

Esther's sister Ann, who donated a kidney to the husband of the woman who gave her own kidney to Esther, echoed a similar sentiment of victory.

Nephrologist Rajesh Kumar from BSES hospital, where the other part of the swap transplant was done, said the patient at his end was doing well.

"All I can say right now is that I'm happy for both families," said Dr Kumar.

From his hospital cot, Aarif said all credit goes to doctors and well wishers. "Let's hope this set a precedent to the world about how two countries can share organs and make life happy for so many kidney failure patients," he said.

Aarif's wife Sabira said she was very grateful to the almighty.

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Kidney registry scores first success

Apex Swap Transplant Registry helps Dinesh Sanghani and Munshi Mansoori give each other a second shot at life

Santosh Andhale

It was a long, anxious wait, but Dinesh Sanghani, 41, and Munshi Mansoori, 34, are happy to have found each other.

Sanghani and Mansoori are the first beneficiaries of Apex Swap Transplant Registry (ASTR), a kind of match-making service for kidney failure patients that hinges on organ exchange. The ASTR is a database of patients searching for kidney donors matching their blood type and Sanghani and Mansoori are the first couple of the 'paired donation' initiative.

Sanghani, 41, and Mansoori, 34, both businessmen, needed a pair of kidneys each after theirs stopped working. So they became just the kind of 'kidney couples' whose needs the ASTR seeks to address.

Here's how it works and everything, of course, hinges on compatible blood grouping. Dinesh's blood group is B positive, but doctors could not consider giving him wife Dimple's kidney as she is A positive. So, the ASTR helped



(From left)
Dinesh
Sanghani,
Razia
Mansoori,
Dimple
Sanghani, and
Munshi
Mansoori at
the Apex
Kidney Care
at Shushrut
Hospital
—Vipin Pawar/DNA

the Sanghanis locate the Mansooris so that Dimple can donate her kidney to Munshi Mansoori and Munshi's wife Razia can give Dinesh one of hers. A simple swap, made possible because of compatible blood types.

Now that the Sanghanis and Mansooris have found each other via the ASTR register, they are ready to undergo the complex kidney swap. All that is left to do before the surgery is some paper work, which may take a month.

On December 30, 2010, DNA

became the first to report how the ASTR will help kidney failure patients. The national registry database was set up in response to the needs of patients frustrated with mismatched blood types that often delayed kidney transplants.

The ASTR, that contains details of kidney patients and their relatives, was set up and is managed by the Apex Kidney Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation. After DNA reported the setting up of the registry, 50 patients registered their names. The

ASTR makes matches between people who will give away one kidney if their relative gets one in return.

The Zonal Transplant Coordination Committee too keeps a registry of people wanting kidneys, but the ASTR somehow makes the task of locating donors easier.

Within days of its opening, the ASTR has built a database of scores of families with kidney patients. "Our objective is to see that a robust organ distribution system evolves for such paired exchanges.

The ASTR office is at Shushrut Hospital in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Mumbai, and any patient or relative can register names to find matches, said Dr Vishw Billa, coordinator, ASTR, senior nephrologist, BGS hospital.

"Paired organ donation is a completely legal procedure. The ASTR will also stop people from considering illegal transplants from unknown donors, prevent organ trafficking and the stigma previously attached to India," said Dr Kothari, consultant nephrologist at Hinduja Hospital, joint secretary, ZTCC.

For two years, Dinesh Sanghani had been undergoing dialysis and the family had been desperately praying to God for a kidney donor with a matching blood group to turn up. "Even when I was ready to donate my kidney, we could not do anything. Finally, I found a donor through the registry. It is a ray of hope for kidney patients," said wife Dimple.



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Bravo! Mumbai doctors hit the bull's-eye

DNA / Santosh Andhale / Wednesday, June 26, 2013 7:04 IST

After facing many hurdles for getting permission from the government, country's first-ever domino kidney transplant was successfully performed in the city on Tuesday.

The domino kidney transplant, which involves five donors and five recipients, was conducted in three hospitals — two transplant procedures each in Bombay Hospital and Hiranandani hospital and one in Hinduja hospital. All the transplants were done on the same day.

A domino transplant is a series of surgeries in which each of the five donors gives an organ to a recipient not related to him/her, while the donor's relative needing an organ gets it from a recipient's relative. Legal issues are involved in organ donation cases when the donor and recipient are not related.

Dr Shrirang Bicchu, nephrologist, Bombay hospital, said, "The success of this procedure will now set a precedent and encourage people to opt for it as it reduces a patient's wait for the organ. We are very thankful to the government of Maharashtra; it helped speed up the procedure."

As the transplant was being conducted in city hospitals and because four of the five donor-recipient pairs were from Maharashtra, permission of the state authorisation committee was necessary, which was given last week.

On May 19, dna had first reported about the denial of the Rajasthan government in giving its nod to the procedure. Of the five donor-recipient pairs involved, one is from Rajasthan.

Permission had been sought from the Rajasthan state authorisation committee, a body mandated to clear such transplants to prevent illegal trade of organs.

The committee, however, denied permission citing the Supreme Court guidelines that said nothing about a 'domino' procedure.

"It is a routine procedure in the United States; its success has been reported in several journals. The interesting thing about domino kidney transplant is that despite blood group not matching, with the help of this five-way swap, those in need are able to get the organ; otherwise, they have to wait for a long time. All credit goes to the Apex Swap Transplant Registry that addresses the issue of mismatch in blood groups or tissues in donor-recipient pairs," said Dr Rajesh Kumar, nephrologist, Hiranandani hospital, one of the doctors on the domino transplant team.

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India's first domino kidney transplant tomorrow

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Come Tuesday, country's first ever domino kidney transplant — involving five donors and five recipients — will be performed at three Mumbai hospitals after the State Government Authorisation Committee gave its nod for the procedure last week.

A domino transplant is a series of surgeries where each donor gives an organ to a recipient not related to him/her, while the donor's relative needing an organ gets it from a recipient's relative. Legal issues are involved in organ donation cases when the donor and recipient are not related.

As the transplant is to be conducted in city hospitals — Hinduja hospital, Bombay hospital and Hiranandani hospital — and four of the five donor-recipient pairs are from Maharashtra, permission of the State Authorisation Committee was must.

On May 19, dna had reported that the Rajasthan government had refused to give permission for the procedure as the fifth pair belonged to that state.

They had applied for permission from the Rajasthan state authorisation committee, a body mandated to clear such transplants to prevent illegal trade of organs. The Rajasthan panel denied permission citing the Supreme Court guidelines that said nothing about a 'domino' procedure.

When the same pair recently approached the government again with detailed statistics about domino kidney transplant procedures in the western countries, the panel said that there was no need for a further No-Objection Certificate (NOC).

"The interesting thing about domino transplant is that despite blood group not matching, with the help of five way swap exchange, they are able to undergo kidney transplant. Otherwise, they have to wait for a long. All credit goes to the Apex Swap Transplant Registry (ASTRA) that addresses the issue of mismatch in blood groups or tissues in couples who need transplants," Said Dr Jatin Kothari, Nephrologist, Hinduja Hospital.

"All the transplants will be done on the same day in different hospitals in the city. Everything — surgeons, paramedical team, operation theatres — is in place," Kothari added.

What is it?

For an organ transplant, blood and tissue of donor and recipient must match. If they don't, a domino transplant is necessary. It is a series of surgeries where each donor gives an organ to a recipient not related to him/her, while the donor's relative needing an organ gets it from a recipient's relative. A previous attempt to perform a five-pair domino transplant failed when a recipient died while waiting for permission from the state.

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