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ADI organ donor registry grows, transplants fall

By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH
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Over 100,000 people registered in 2012; "we are doing all we can to raise awareness," says director-general at Haifa's Rambam Medical Center.



Photo by: Courtesy, Health Ministry

Giving people who registered as potential organ donors higher priority in receiving organs if they need them has significantly increased the number listed with ADI/National Transplant Center. But at the same time, due to reduced deaths from road accidents and strokes, the actual number of transplanted organs declined in 2012.

According to the center's annual report released by the Health Ministry on Wednesday, more than 100,000 more individuals joined the registry in 2012. The total number of Israelis with ADI cards has reached an unprecedented 717,300 people. In addition, over 50 people on the ADI list who needed an organ transplant themselves received one by getting higher priority for it.

At the same time, there was a moderate decline in the number of people who died while waiting in the queue for an organ – 91 last year compared to 105 in 2011. The rate of deaths of people waiting in the queue for organs was 8 percent compared to an average of 22% in European countries.

EuroTransplant has reported the much higher waiting-in-the-queue death rate in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and others. The largest number of people waiting in the queue need a kidney transplant, followed by liver, lungs and heart.

The transplant center also noted a 16% decline in the rate of fatal strokes from 218 annually in recent years to 183 in 2012. Such patients have often provided a supply of organs to others. Thus, as each stroke victim provided up to seven organs, fewer strokes meant somewhat fewer organ transplants.

The center is now looking for explanations of the good news that more stroke victims survive. Nevertheless, the rate of families who agree to give organs of their loved ones who died of strokes has remained similar to that in the previous year and was about 50%.

The other welcome news – a 23% drop in deaths from road accidents – also reduces the number of organs available for transplant. Therefore, the number of families who agreed to donate their loved ones, organs thus declined to 57 last year, compared to 89 in 2011.

Israel Transplant Center chairman Prof. Rafael Beyar, who is director-general of Haifa's Rambam Medical Center, said it is doing all it can to increase awareness of the importance of organ donation and increase the

number of families willing to give their loved ones, organs.

There are currently 1,114 people waiting for an organ transplant – 755 for a kidney, 164 for a liver, 93 for a heart, one for combined heart/lung and 11 for a combined kidney/ pancreas.

Because the living are able to donate kidneys, the actual number of transplants last year was 277, compared to 384 in 2011 and 228 in 2010.

The number of transplants with organs from the diseased included 57 receiving kidneys, 7 kidney/pancreas, a pair of kidneys in three people (usually taken from older donors), 40 livers, 3 liver/kidneys, 14 hearts, 16 double lungs, 22 single lungs.

In addition, 758 eye corneas (which are not included in the regular list of transplanted organs) were implanted; 730 people are still waiting for a cornea to restore or improve their vision.

ADI last year increased its information and awareness campaigns significantly, especially in Hebrew, Arabic and Russian. Campaigns were brought to 351 schools, 353 medical meetings, 117 student meetings, 124 encounters with the general public and 89 sessions with soldiers.

A special campaign using newsman Danny Kashmaru promoting registration with ADI on TV. radio, street signs, stands and – for the first time – the digital media.



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