

# Not enough kidney donors

‘Campaign programmes not effective in getting more to donate organ’

By **LOH FOON FONG**  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Only a mere 2% of Malaysians have donated their kidneys in the last 20 years, says National Kidney Foundation (NKF) founder Dr S.S. Gill.

He said the donation campaign programmes had not been effective in raising the kidney donor rates.

“If we continue with our present approach to obtain more kidney donors, we will be in the same boat in the next 20 years,” he said yesterday.

On Saturday, two men became Malaysia’s first patients to successfully undergo kidney transplants by receiving kidneys from their spouses who were of incompatible blood groups.

While he welcomed such gestures, Dr Gill said more needs to be done to encourage cadaveric donors as this would be the first and best choice.

He said most kidney transplants were done in India or China and with laws passed in these countries controlling the transplants, the cost of

transplanting a kidney had escalated from between RM30,000 and RM50,000 to RM150,000 and RM250,000 or more.

“In the past, only a few could afford it and now only the super-rich are able to undergo these transplants,” he said, adding that the number of dialysis patients have increased with over 4,000 new patients recorded last year.

Dr Gill said many countries have encouraged organ transplants.

“Some, like Iran and Australia, offer compensation for donors in several forms. Spain has one of the highest transplant rates resulting from trained and persuasive transplant co-ordinators in most hospitals,” he added.

The National Transplant Resource Centre chief coordinator Datin Dr Lela Yasmin Mansor said the centre was looking into the Australian method of asking its learner drivers to volunteer to donate their kidneys if they die in a road accident.

She said they had been getting more referrals from hospitals and calls from family members of the deceased who wanted to donate their organs.

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