

# Doctors in private hospitals not consulted, says NKF

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**PETALING JAYA:** Doctors in private hospitals who have experience in organ transplantation and who would like to do transplant work were not consulted prior to a Health Ministry ban, National Kidney Foundation chairman Datuk Dr Zaki Morad Mohd Zaher said.

"They (the ministry) may have discussed with a particular hospital but not with others who have the experience or who were doing transplant surgeries. They were not asked about what the issues were," he said.

Dr Zaki, who formerly headed Hos-

pital Kuala Lumpur (HKL) Nephrology Department, is currently in private practice.

He was commenting on a report in *The Star* last week on a two-year private hospital ban to do transplant surgeries which swelled the already stretched resources in public hospitals.

Transplant surgeries are done in HKL, Universiti Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) and Selayang Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (HUKM).

Since the two-year ban, some patients have turned to UMMC and the normal three-to-four-month wait

has now swelled to about two years.

A living-relative case also takes about two years in HKL.

The cease-work order came after the ministry's ruling that private hospitals must have a dedicated transplant team and must apply for a transplant licence if they are to do transplant surgeries.

At least four private hospitals have applied for accreditation but none was given.

Dr Zaki said the two-year wait for a living-relative transplant at public hospitals after having cleared the battery of tests should not happen.

However, he said this situation was due to the current practice of

urologists doubling up as transplant surgeons in Malaysia.

"The problem is, they (urologists) do not have much time to focus on kidney transplants because they have other work to do. There was a time when the department was having two slots a week, or up to six transplants a month. But now, I noticed even to get one slot a week is a challenge," he said.

He said HKL has been the main renal transplant centre since 1975 and 80% transplants were done in HKL but there is a need for two to three centres to do kidney transplant in order to concentrate resources.

"So HKL should be the main cen-

tre but it should have a dedicated transplant surgery unit," he said.

He brought up this need for a dedicated transplant surgery unit before he retired from HKL but this was not implemented.

Dr Zaki retired in 2006 and although he is currently in private practice, he still has an interest in public healthcare.

In June, *The Star* reported that the shortage of surgeons was an issue in transplant work.

It was reported then that an average of 60 organ transplants, mostly renal, are done in government hospitals a year, but there are 18,000 Malaysians on the waiting list.