

Kidney disease explained

Doctors, patients and organ donors share vital info at webinar

IN AN effort to raise awareness on the importance of organ donation, the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia (NKF) organised a webinar themed “Living Kidney Transplant”.

Moderated by Dr Maisarah Jalonmuhali, a consultant nephrologist and physician from University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC), the webinar featured discussions on the realities of living with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and the misconceptions surrounding organ donation.

Speakers included lecturer and Hospital Pengajar Universiti Putra Malaysia nephrology clinical specialist Dr Wan Zul Haikal Hafiz, as well as kidney patients who shared their personal experiences of coping with the condition.

Kidney disease has become a serious public health concern for Malaysia in recent years.

A study conducted in 2018 showed that the prevalence of CKD in the country as 15.48% — a significant increase from 9.07% in 2011.

CKD is categorised into five stages based on its progression, with end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) or complete kidney failure in stage five.

Most ESKD patients will have to undergo dialysis or wait for a kidney transplant.

At present, there is no proven treatment for reversing the effects of serious kidney damage.

Dr Wan Zul Haikal said kidney transplant was an ideal treatment option to change the lives of



Dr Maisarah says patients with willing donors should consult a nephrologist.



Dr Wan Zul Haikal says kidney transplant is ideal for ESKD patients.



Along Eyzendy with his wife Hamidah, who donated her kidney to him.

ESKD patients.

“We encourage donor transplantation from the patient has an emotional tie with — not only immediate family members like parents and siblings but also spouses and extended blood relatives.

“We want to lower the chances of the donated organ from being rejected,” she explained.

Dr Maisarah urged patients with willing donors, even if not related, to consult a nephrologist.

“Don’t be shy or conclude that the procedure cannot be done.

“If the nephrologist decides that the patient and donor can move forward with the procedure, they will be referred to an independent body called ‘Unrelated’ – with interviews conducted to ensure there is no conflict of interests between the patient and donor.

“They will then decide if they can

proceed with the transplant procedure,” she said.

With deceased organ donation rates in Malaysia currently standing at just 0.86 donors per million inhabitants, ESKD patients have to contend with long waiting times for their transplants.

Compared to receiving kidney from deceased donors, those from living donors offer better outcomes and long-term survival for patients.

Webinar attendees were also moved by the heartwarming sharing session with kidney transplant recipients as well as the inspiring stories of their generous donors.

Sharing their struggles of living with ESKD, recipients highlighted the many ways their lives improved after a kidney transplant, from being able to enjoy an active lifestyle to being free from constant dialysis treatments.

Mohamad Rafi Mohd Isa, a teacher, described his arduous journey of living with stage-four kidney disease for almost eight years.

He transformed the dialysis centre into a “playground” for his children while he was hooked to a dialysis machine for a four-hour session three times a week.

He also expressed joy at getting a second lease of life thanks to his wife Nur Asyikin Mohamad Nadzri, who also shared her experience.

Nur Asyikin dispelled fears around being a living organ donor, saying she continues to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.

Another kidney transplant recipient featured was Malaysian actor Mohd Eyzendy Aziz, also known as Along Eyzendy, and his wife, Hamidah Mohd Yatim, the donor who gave him a second chance at life.