

AIIMS training staff to motivate organ donors

DurgeshNandan.Jha
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is training its doctors and nurses to convince families of patients who are either declared brain dead or dead to donate organs.

Till date, it was the responsibility of transplant coordinators alone to convince the families to donate organs.

Aarti Vij, chief of the Organ Retrieval and Banking Organisation (ORBO) at the hospital, said 260 resident doctors and more than 400 critical care nurses have already been trained. "The doctors and nurses are directly in contact with the family and it is easier for them to convince the family to donate organs," Vij said.

A living donor can donate only a kidney, a portion of pancreas and li-

ver to his or her immediate blood relative but an individual declared brain dead, who is otherwise healthy, can help multiple persons. His or her heart, two kidneys, liver, corneas, even the bones and skin can be used to infuse new life into others.

"In India, about 2.5 lakh people require kidney transplant every year. But only about 10,000 get it due to scarcity of donors. Most of the kidneys are retrieved from living donors. In case of heart, the crisis is even more acute. While 50,000 people suffering from end-stage heart disease required a new organ, only about 30 to 40 are able to get it," said Dr Jagdish Prasad, director general of health services.

Prasad said that the government is working to create awareness among the medical professionals as well as public about organ donation. "On Friday, we held a training pro-



gramme for 106 transplant coordinators from across the country. Also, a lot of focus is on training more doctors to retrieve organs and augment infrastructure for trans-

plants," he added.

Many countries have the provision for compulsory declaration of one's wish to donate organ in the driving licence but India is yet to take a call on that. This, doctors said, is a major hindrance in promoting organ donation. "In many cases, even if the donor has pledged for donations the family opts out of it," said a doctor.

While Spain has 35 organ donors per million people, Britain has 27 donors, US 26, Canada 14 and Australia 11, India's count stands at about 0.1 donors per million population.

Experts said anyone, regardless of age or gender, can become an organ and tissue donor. In case of a person less than 18 years of age, consent of parents or legal guardian is required. In the event of death or brain death, the hospital can harvest the organs with the consent of immediate family members.