

Tissue transplantation gets a boost, Govt opens new Centre at NOTTO

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After setting up the mechanism for organ transplantation such as heart, lungs, liver, pancreas and kidneys, the Union Health Ministry has expanded its ambit to cover tissues such as skin and bone marrow as well. On Wednesday, Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel inaugurated the National Biomaterial Centre at Safdarjung Hospital. It is the first of its kind facility in the Government sector in the country.

Welcoming the much-awaited initiative of setting up such a centre that aims at ensuring availability of various tissues required for various medical purposes, Patel called for spreading awareness about organ donation that can save a precious life.

“It’s high time that we understand, and also spread awareness in the community at large, that a living person can save the life of only one person but a deceased or cadaver organ donor can save up to 9 lives by donating vital organs.

“Apart from promoting organ donation, it is also important to improve the infrastructure and capacity of government hospitals to undertake transplantation so

that the poor and needy could benefit,” she pointed out.

Expressing concern that country had dismal organ donation rate in the world, she called for harvesting organs from the road accident victims, with around 1.5 lakhs fatal road mishaps being reported annually. Think of the difference we could make if we can promote cadaver donation, she added.

Dr Vimal Bhandari, head of the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) explained that a single person can save as many as eight lives through organ donation, which includes donation of the heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, kidneys and intestine. Extraordinarily, that same person can also improve the lives of over 50 others through tissue donation that can go onto heal those suffering from burn wounds, replace and reconstruct joints, and promote healing in various body parts reconstruction.

For example, a single skin graft will help improve the living conditions of serious burn victims, while one gift of bone tissue or tendons will make reconstructive surgeries possible, Dr Bhandari said.

NOTTO is an apex centre for nationwide activities of coordination and networking

for procuring and distributing organs and tissues and a registry of organs and tissues donation and transplantation in the country.

Director General of Health Services, Jagdish Prasad, stressed on capacity building of health professionals while Joint Secretary (Health) Sudhir Kumar called for raising awareness and advocacy among doctors and citizens to encourage them for organ and tissue donation.

The Government has plans to set up five other tissue centres at KEM Hospital in Mumbai, Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital in Chennai, Guwahati Medical College, PGI Chandigarh, and IPGIMER in Kolkata.

Tissues to be stored at National Biomaterial Centre

Bone and bone products e.g. deep frozen bone allograft, freeze dried bone allograft, dowel allograft, AAA Bone, duramater, facialata, fresh frozen human amniotic membrane, high temperature treated board cadaveric joints like knees, hips and shoulders, cadaveric cranium bone graft, loose bone fragment, different types of bovine allograft, used in orthodontics, skin graft, cornea, heart valves and vessels. The Centre will also add other tissues gradually.