

Transplant Games

Transplant Games 2023 - Kochi, Kerala

Jose C Periappuram

Heart Care Foundation, Kochi, India



The Transplant Games are a multi-sport event for individuals who have undergone organ transplants or are living donors. These games aim to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation and transplantation, while also celebrating the success of organ transplantation in saving lives.

The primary purpose of the Transplant Games is to honor and celebrate the courage and determination of transplant recipients, as well as to recognize the selflessness of donors and donor families. It's also a way to showcase the success of organ transplantation in improving the quality of life for those who have received a transplant and to spread the message of organ donation. Participating in the Transplant Games enables recipients and donors to connect with others who have gone through similar experiences. This sense of community and support can be incredibly valuable for individuals and their families.

In December 2022, a group of volunteers ran for the cause in Kochi Spice Coast Marathon along with Dinoy Thomas, a heart transplant recipient. The event was highly appreciated by the Cricketer, Sachin Tendulkar. Dinoy, went on to represent India in World Transplant Games Perth 2023 in which Team India secured 35 medals. Those events were direct testimony, to demonstrate to the society at large, that a thriving life is possible after a transplant. Inspired by the World Transplant Games, the notion for a similar initiative in the country was conceived.



On a warm sultry March night in 2013, Manu left lying on a railway track with a bleeding decapitated hand. This cool morning of 9 December 2023, hardly ten years later, Manu was a celebrity, golfing with his transplanted hand at Transplant Games 2023, wowing participants, public

and dignitaries alike! Manu is currently working as a Transplant Counseling Assistant at Amrita Hospital, Kochi.

Preethy Unnale (Delhi), the longest-surviving heart transplant recipient in the country, was a vision smashing shuttle cocks and posing with a heartfelt smile all through the day. She won multiple medals amidst the non-stop claps from the gallery.



While Varun, the 13 year old from Bangalore, who also participated in World Transplant Games 2023, Perth, was another winner, whose words feel so inspirational to all gathered.

Laced with stories like these from all corners of the country, the Transplant Games held in December 2023 at the Rajiv Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Kochi saw a gathering of 450 individuals who had undergone organ transplantation, or donated or immediate family of those who chose to donate the organs of their loved ones.

The Games was organized by Heart Care Foundation in association with organizations such as Kerala State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (K-SOTTO), Liver Foundation of Kerala (LiFoK), Kochi Corporation, KMRL, Regional Sports Center, GCDA, and Kerala State Youth Welfare Board.

Padma Shri Mammooty, the actor, formally inaugurated the games by receiving the torch on December 9, 2023. The event was presided over by the chief guest Major Ravi, the film director and a kidney transplant recipient.

The Games included the 5 Kilometer Race Walk which was inaugurated by the kidney donor and the well known businessman Kochouseph Chittilappilli at the Jawaharlal Nehru International stadium, Kaloor.

A total of 450 individuals participated in 11 competitions. Among them, 47 were kidney donors, 56 were kidney recipients, 132 were liver donors, 167 were liver recipients, 38 were heart recipients. The recipients who underwent pancreas



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and hand transplant also became part of the Games. It is the first time in India that such a large number of individuals have participated in the Transplant Games. The competitions were conducted for various age categories (below 21 years, below 40 years, and above 40 years) and in specific segments for both donors and recipients. The Transplant Games, 2023 has secured a place in India Book of Records as the largest organ donation related gathering in India.

Valedictory event was presided by Hon'ble Speaker of Kerala State Legislative Assembly Shri. A N Shamseer. The event was honoured by the presence of Shri. P Rajeev, Hon'ble Minister for Industries and

Law, Shri. M.B Rajesh, Hon'ble Minister for Local Self Governance and Excise, Shri. A.K Saseendran, Hon'ble Minister for Transport, Government of Kerala.

After the Games, there was a lot of discussion on the necessity of organ transplants which rekindled the transplant community's passion for advocating for the cause. The time has come to strengthen cooperation amongst all the groups working towards this goal, ensuring that nobody loses out on a second opportunity at life!



Dr. Noble Gracious K-SOTTO

"The purpose of organizing the games is to convey the message that organ transplant is the best treatment for end-stage organ failure patients, enabling them to lead a near-normal life. It is a noble gesture that provides new meaning to life for both living donors and deceased donor families. This initiative will encourage more families to come forward and consent to deceased donations, as well as motivate living donors to help their loved ones by donating a portion of the liver or a kidney."



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