

*Interview***Odisha - An Emerging State's Experience
with Deceased Organ Donation****Bramhadatta Pattnaik**
AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, India**Dr. Bramhadatta Pattnaik**
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AIIMS, Bhubaneswar**AIIMS Bhubaneswar has recently initiated deceased organ donation program. Tell us about it?**

AIIMS Bhubaneswar achieved a landmark milestone by performing its first deceased organ donation on February 23, 2024. This was followed by two more successful organ donations in July 2024 and October 2024, reflecting the institution's evolving intent towards this noble work. The journey began with the start of living kidney transplants on August 30, 2022. To promote awareness, the

hospital conducted several public education campaigns. A dedicated transplant coordinator was appointed to streamline the organ donation process. Brainstem Death Certifying committee was formed with the guidance from SOTTO Odisha.

The first donation involved a 14-year-old female admitted on February 15, 2024, with loss of consciousness. She was a known case of CKD and hypertension, undergoing maintenance dialysis. A multidisciplinary team, with the support from AIIMS administration and SOTTO Odisha, confirmed brainstem death on February 22, 2024. While approached, her family courageously consented for organ donation. Her liver was retrieved by the AIIMS Bhubaneswar team in collaboration with ILBS, New Delhi and transported to ILBS for transplantation.

Subsequent organ donations in July 2024 and October 2024 further established AIIMS Bhubaneswar as a key player in organ transplantation.

Which all organs have been retrieved in the donations? Did AIIMS Bhubaneswar utilize any of the donated organs?

We successfully retrieved livers and kidneys during our organ donation efforts. Additionally, we independently retrieved liver from a 2-year-old pediatric BSD donor, and the liver was transported to ILBS, New Delhi. On July 7, 2024, we conducted our second cadaveric kidney transplant as part of our ongoing organ donation efforts. To date, we have performed a total of four deceased donor kidney transplants.

Is AIIMS Bhubaneswar also the first government hospital in Odisha to start living renal transplants?

SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack is the first government hospital in the state to start living donor renal transplantations. In 2022, AIIMS Bhubaneswar initiated its living kidney transplant program, performing 15 successful surgeries in 2023. By 2024, we introduced deceased kidney transplant program, completing four transplants in the same year. To date, our team has achieved a total of 34 living and four deceased kidney transplants, demonstrating our commitment to improving transplant outcomes for patients.

Are there plans to start other organ transplants?

We have already obtained the license for liver transplants, and our advanced liver transplant ICU is getting fully equipped and ready for implementation. The Surgical Gastroenterology team is already doing

independent liver retrievals, and soon going to start with both living and deceased donor liver transplants. Additionally, there are plans to initiate other transplant programs such as hand & cornea.

What are the other transplant centers in Odisha?

When discussing the landscape of organ transplantation in Odisha, it's heartening to see the commitment of various institutions to support those in need. AIIMS Bhubaneswar and SCB Cuttack are shining examples of compassion in action, as these leading public sector hospitals strive to provide budget-friendly transplant options for underprivileged patients. Their dedication makes a significant difference in the lives of many individuals and families facing health challenges. Additionally, private centers like SUM Ultimate, KIMS Bhubaneswar, Apollo Hospital Bhubaneswar, and Utkal Hospitals are taking important steps to offer organ transplants, further contributing to the well-being of the community. This collaborative effort between public and private sectors is truly paving the way for improved healthcare access in Odisha, showcasing a united front in support of those in desperate need of life-changing treatments.

Tell us about the initiatives taken to promote organ donation.

The state is launching various initiatives to promote organ donation by collaborating with NGOs, schools, police, and district administration.

- State honors the deceased organ donors with "guard of honor"
- The "Suraj Award" is presented to the deceased donor's next-of-kin

What, according to you, are the challenges for organ donation and transplantation in Odisha? And opportunities?

With the right combination of public awareness, improved affordability, and robust policy, Odisha has a strong opportunity to emerge as a regional leader in organ transplantation. By addressing current challenges and seizing available opportunities, the state can improve organ donation rates, reduce transplant waiting times, and ensure that life-saving treatments are accessible to all.

Any other thoughts before we close?

The organ donation and transplantation program at AIIMS Bhubaneswar stands as a model of excellence, driven by strong leadership, multidisciplinary coordination, supportive organization, and respect for donor families. Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Ashutosh Biswas, Executive Director, the program has achieved remarkable milestones in transplantation. The involvement of SOTTO, ROTTO, and NOTTO has been instrumental in enabling effective organ retrieval, donation, and transplantation.

In few months' time, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar will start and sustain the much-needed liver transplantation, which will save many lives lost due to acute and end-stage liver diseases.

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