

## At AIIMS, organs of two brain dead donors save 7 lives in 48 hours

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DELHI Updated: Feb 19, 2020 07:02 IST



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India's premier medical institute the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, received organ donations from the families of two brain dead patients in a span of past 48 hours, hospital authorities confirmed on Tuesday.

The two hearts, four kidneys, two livers, four corneas and bones of a 26-year-old man from Kashganj in Uttar Pradesh, and a 61-year-old Delhi man have already been transplanted.

Sixty one-year-old Anil Mittal was a pledged donor with the Dadhichi Deh Dan Samiti, an organisation that works in generating awareness about and promoting organ donation in the country. His family in the past has donated cadavers for research purposes at AIIMS. Mittal was declared brain dead on Monday morning at AIIMS.

“My parents had read stories about Saint Dadhichi, who had donated his body to save gods from the atrocities of demons. We all have been inspired by those stories and it is a sort of our family tradition to pledge a body post death of a loved one. This is the first organ donation in the family,” said Parmod Aggarwal, maternal uncle of Mittal.

The other donation came from Sachin, 26, who was a daily wage labourer working in Delhi and was brought to AIIMS Trauma Centre after he fell from the second floor of a building on Thursday, February 13. Two days later, on February 15, he was declared brain dead. After extensive counselling, Sachin's family agreed to donate his organs.

“This is not the first time that two brain dead donations have happened at AIIMS in a span of 2 days. About 5 years ago there were similar donations at the hospital. But it is certainly rare to have back to back donations by families of brain dead patients,” said Dr Aarti Vij, head, Organ Retrieval and Banking Organisation (ORBO) at AIIMS.

India faces an acute shortage of cadaver organs for transplantation, with barely 5% of the organs that get transplanted annually in India coming from deceased donors. There is a huge gap between demand and supply as India needs about 2.5 lakh kidneys, livers and hearts each year but does not do more than 6,000-7,000 transplants, owing to lack of organs.

At any given day, there are more than 10,000 patients in India in want of an organ for transplant, out of which more than 50% don't have a matching donors within the family, and are forced to rely on organ donations from the families of brain dead patients.

The Central government has also launched the National Organ and Tissue Transplantation Registry in 2015, to bridge the enormous demand and supply gap in organ donations in the country. However, the donation rates are still abysmal.

Union health minister Harsh Vardhan has been strongly emphasising upon the need to motivate individuals, families and organizations to pledge to donate organs after death, and to spread awareness about the importance of organ donation.

“One donor can save life of 7-8 patients and can enhance the quality of life of 40-50 patients,” had said during the organ donation day (February 14).