

Latest in kidney transplants from Japan

Express News Service

Chennai, Jan 23

NEPHROLOGISTS here will listen to Japanese doctors, who have been able to perform kidney transplantations across blood groups and nephron-sparing surgeries successfully for the past two decades.

At a workshop organised by the Madras Institute of Nephrology attached to the Vijaya Health Centre, experts including Dr Hiroshi Toma, chairman, Tokyo Women's Medical College and Dr Kazunari Tanabe, physician/assistant pro-

fessor in department of Urology of the same college will speak on the state-of-the-art technology and treatment methodologies adopted by them for kidney-related diseases.

"Kidney transplantations are done only if the patient and the donor blood groups match. This reduced the number of related donors. Simultaneously, it increased the number of unrelated donors and lead to commercialisation of transplants. If we are less aggressive on tissue matching, leaving things to the advanced immunosuppressive drugs, we will be able to encourage more related donors and help more patients,"

said Dr R Ravichandran.

While the country has more than one lakh kidney disease patients, there are less than 1,000 nephrologists in the country. The number of support systems including kidney dialysis centres are less than 3,000.

In Japan, according to Dr Toma, transplants across blood groups were done since 1969. "We have done more than 200 transplant cases across blood groups and we have found the success rate almost equal to that of transplants within the same blood group," he said. Nevertheless, he added that it is not an easy technique.

The antibodies of the blood groups A and B are removed from the patients pre-operatively through double filtration plasma pheresis. "Unlike the conventional plasma pheresis, the plasma that is removed from the patient is again separated into albumin (contains nutrients) and globulin (contains antibodies) fractions and the albumin is returned. Therefore, the risk is minimised and antibodies are removed," he said. The double filtration plasma pheresis is repeated for a week till all the antibodies are removed.

The Japanese have also been

practising the nephron sparing surgeries. "Normally, a kidney affected by tumour is removed. In addition to the tumour, there is also a loss of functioning kidney tissue. This leads to rapid progression of kidney failure. We have specialised in mapping out the tumour and removing only the tumour tissue without disturbing the normal functioning kidney. This helps in maintaining kidney functions," he said.

According to Dr Ravichandran, at least 20 percent of kidney patients will be benefited if the doctors adopt the procedures after the workshop.