

Kidney transplant patients may get free drugs for life

Sheezan.Nezami
@timesgroup.com

Patna: People with less than Rs2.5 lakh annual income and having undergone kidney transplant under Mukhyamantri Chikitsa Abhiyan will soon get free medicine for life. The state health department is likely to issue a notification in this regard in a fortnight. Even those under the same income group and having a plan to get the transplant under the scheme in future will also be benefited.

Sharing this information, principal secretary (health) Sanjay Kumar told TOI on Monday that the state government has considered an average Rs15,000 monthly medicine requirement for a person post kidney transplant under Mukhyamantri Chikitsa Abhiyan. "Altogether 250 people have undergone kidney transplantation under Mukhyamantri Chikitsa Abhiyan in and outside the state. Families with annual income of less than Rs2.5 lakh are eligible for treatment under the scheme," he said.

Kumar said the department was looking at various factors before issuing a notification. "Instead of giving money in the bank accounts, we are thinking of purchasing medicines in bulk and sending to the district hospitals from where patients can get their monthly requirement. This will serve two purposes — the medicine prices will reduce because of bulk purchase and the person will get the medicine required as s/he may not buy it after getting money," he said, adding that the bidding process for purchasing medicines will be initiated after the notification is issued.

Free medicines to patients, who have undergone kidney transplant, was first announced by state health minister Mangal Pandey on May 26 during a programme organized at



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SANJAY KUMAR
Principal secretary (health)

Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS) to mark 50 successful kidney transplants. So far, IGIMS has successfully transplanted 54 kidneys.

Pandey had said the health department would provide lifelong support to needy people after kidney transplantation.

Doctors involved in kidney transplantation said heavy expenditure is incurred on the patient after the operation. "A patient spends Rs30,000 every month on medicine and various other expenses after kidney transplant. It includes around Rs 15,000 on medicine and another Rs15,000 on various tests required to be done every month. However, this expenditure on medicine and tests reduces with time, especially after five years, when the transplanted kidney gets adapted to the new body," said a senior nephrologist at a city-based private hospital, wishing anonymity.

IGIMS says no to emotionally attached donors for transplant

Sheezan.Nezami@timesgroup.com

Patna: Even though the state government has allowed it, Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS) avoids emotionally attached donors for kidney transplants. IGIMS is the only government institute doing kidney transplant in Bihar. However, private hospital Paras HMRI allows emotionally attached donors, but there have been only two such cases out of total 23 transplants done there so far. In both the cases, the donor was a close relative.

"In one case, the donor and recipient were brothers-in-law (jija-saala) while they were first cousins in the second case," said Dr Ajay Kumar, director of urology, nephrology and kidney transplant at Paras HMRI.

As per norms, donors for kidney transplant can be under three categories — family members, emotionally attached or brain-dead persons. Fat-

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her, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, sisters, grandparents and grandchildren come under the first category.

IGIMS superintendent Dr Manish Mandal and urology department head Dr Vijoy Kumar said the institute avoids transplantation from emotionally attached person as that can be for money, which is illegal. So far, 54 kidneys have been successfully transplanted at IGIMS and all were donated by family members.

IGIMS nephrology department head Dr Om Kumar said, "There is no problem in transplanting kidney of a close relative once the relationship is established. But when a maid, neighbour or friend offers kidney for transplant, it becomes suspicious."

Another IGIMS doctor said they have heard of cases where recipient family members lured poor people like rickshawpullers and maids by promising monetary help. "Establishing emotional attachment is actually difficult, if the donor and recipient are not relatives," he said.