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Kidney transplantation as we all know provides significant extended mortality and quality of life to patients and is also far more cost effective than maintaining a patient on dialysis.

These ideas are worth considering especially when the number of patients on kidney dialysis will just continue to grow and grow and already stands at almost 2000 people in Ireland.

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VIVIENNE TRAYNOR TAKES UP THE ROLE OF AMBASSADOR FOR ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS

Living Kidney donor and RTÉ broadcaster Vivienne Traynor has taken up the voluntary role of ambassador for Organ Donor Awareness Week 2016 which is organised by the Irish Kidney Association. Like the previous ambassador Mary Kennedy, Vivienne has also a deep personal connection to organ donation. Vivienne's nephew Martin Traynor underwent two kidney transplants, his first for which she was the living kidney donor and five years later his second transplant was from a deceased donor. The announcement of Vivienne's ambassadorship was made this weekend when she made a presentation to members from the 25 countrywide branches of the Irish Kidney Association at its headquarters at Donor House, Park West, Dublin 12.

Vivienne, the RTÉ News Anchor and Courts Correspondent, witnessed first-hand the whole process of organ donation and transplantation from a deceased donor for her nephew Martin (now age 35) in November 2014. This was a very different experience from five years previously when she was a living kidney donor to him. Following the first transplant which they underwent in the UK, Martin became a father for the first time to Ted (now 3). Vivienne, the 44 year old mother of four, also completed a Law Degree in 2014. The circle of life continued after Martin's second transplant at Beaumont Hospital and he and his partner Mary have since become parents for the second time with a baby sister Daisy (now 10 months) for Ted.

Vivienne said "When news came through that a second kidney was available for Martin I was at first elated but this feeling was very quickly replaced by thoughts for the deceased donor and their family. I was really touched that a family in the midst of all their grief took the time to consider someone else. I cannot find the words to express what that meant to us at that moment, on that day and every day since. It is something I think of regularly and I know Martin thinks about it every day. To see Martin come back from surgery in a matter of hours and given a whole new lease of life was one of the greatest things I have witnessed. The kindness of strangers meant so much to us that day."

Vivienne explained that "I was honoured to be able to donate a kidney to Martin in July 2009 following his three years of dialysis treatment. My sister Gina, Martin's aunt, had also come forward for testing but my kidney was chosen towards the end of the testing process. Both Martin and I made a good recovery after the operations and the successful transplant allowed him to enjoy a normal life for five years away from dialysis and in that time he became a father. However in 2013 signs of Martin's original condition, IgA nephropathy, returned and it started to affect the transplanted kidney. By mid-2014 he was back on dialysis and eventually placed back on the waiting list for another transplant. He was just six weeks on the list when a kidney from a deceased donor became available in November 2014."

"I am delighted to have been invited by the Irish Kidney Association to be the ambassador for Donor Awareness Week and I hope that by sharing the story of donation and transplantation in our family we can help other families to start the conversation about their wishes surrounding deceased organ donation."

The 2016 campaign will feature Vivienne Traynor in radio advertising as well as on posters, encouraging the public to support organ donation.

There are approximately 700 people in Ireland awaiting life-saving heart, lung, liver, kidney and pancreas transplants. Thanks to the gift of organ donation over 3000 people in Ireland are enjoying

extended life. In 2015, 266 organs were transplanted, 233 were as a result of the generosity of the families of 81 deceased donors and the remaining 33 were from living kidney donors.

St. Vincent's Hospital conducted 61 liver transplants in 2015. The Mater Hospital conducted a record 36 lung transplants as well as 16 heart transplants in 2015 and Beaumont Hospital carried out 153 kidney transplants including 33 from living donors.

The focus of Organ Donor Awareness Week is to raise awareness about the ongoing and ever increasing demand for organ transplantation which relies on the public for organ donation. Its key message is that families need to talk and keep the reminders of their willingness to donate visible by carrying the organ **donor card**, downloading the **Smartphone App** and permitting **Code 115** to be included on their **driver's license**.

Organ Donor Awareness Week also serves as a fundraising exercise for the Irish Kidney Association. Throughout the Week (2nd April - 9th April, 2016), the Association's volunteers will be out on the streets, and in shopping centres throughout the country, selling 'forget-me-not-flower' emblems, brooches, pens and shopping trolley discs. All proceeds will go towards the Irish Kidney Association's aid for patients on dialysis and those patients fortunate enough to have received a kidney transplant. The Irish Kidney Association's charitable activities include the provision of a 13 double bedroom free accommodation facility for patients and their families in the grounds of Beaumont Hospital and holiday centres located in Tramore and Kerry, together with patient advocacy, advice, financial aid and rehabilitative, health promotion through sport and the provision of kidney patient information and education. The IKA has introduced another fundraising technique. **You can text "kidney" to 50300 and €2 will be donated from your mobile phone account to the IKA.**

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-Ends-

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IKA SUGGESTS GREATER TIES WITH NORTH WOULD INCREASE ORGAN TRANSPLANT RATES

There are over 3000 people in Ireland enjoying extended life as a result of organ transplantation. The Mater Hospital conducted a record number of heart and lung transplant operations in 2014. It was a record year for kidney transplants for children and more living donor kidney transplants were carried out last year than ever before.

The opportunity to foster greater links with Northern Ireland to improve organ transplantation rates was proposed as a 'win win' situation for both sides of the border, by the Chief Executive of the Irish Kidney Association, Mark Murphy. He was speaking at the national launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week 2015 by the Minister for Health Leo Varadkar T.D., which was held at the Mansion House, Dublin on Monday, 23rd March. The life saving awareness campaign is organised by the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) and will commence on Saturday 28th March and continue until 4th April. During the Week IKA volunteers will be distributing organ donor cards and selling 'forget-me-not flower' emblems in towns and villages throughout the country.

Speaking at the campaign's launch, Mr. Murphy said, "Accepting that such a partnership with Northern Ireland might take some years to realise, many more people North and South would benefit from transplantation as a result, and considerable financial savings could be achieved for both health services."

"Last year we transplanted 3.35 organs per deceased donor but only 1.56 organs, less than half our figure, were transplanted into Northern Ireland patients, despite their excellent retrieval levels of 4 organs per donor."

"I believe the all Ireland rates of organ transplantation could be greatly enhanced especially for hearts, lungs and liver. All the north's heart, lungs and liver patients are required to travel to the UK for their transplant operations. The shorter the time an organ is outside a body the greater the potential there is for its transplant success and longevity. Our access to the UK for complex kidney transplants and the paired kidney exchange programme could be conducted in Belfast instead of Coventry. An all Ireland partnership would offer scientific, geographical and financial advantages while increasing the number of transplants carried out."

In his address at the national launch, Minister for Health Leo Varadkar said, "an organ transplant can make an enormous difference to a patient, and to the lives of those around them. That's why Organ Donor Awareness Week is an important annual event. Although Ireland has a reasonable strong record on organ donation, I would like to see our rates rise to levels seen in other European countries. In 2014 the number of deceased donors was lower than in 2013, but we performed well in terms of maximising the number of organs that were transplanted. A total of 251 transplants were performed thanks to the generosity of 63 deceased donors and 40 living donors. Last year I launched a new scheme to reimburse the expenses of living donors. And additional funding of almost €3m has been provided to the HSE's Organ Donation and Transplant Office to develop the most appropriate infrastructure for organ donation and transplantation. This includes for 19 whole-time-equivalent staff dedicated to organ donation and transplantation across the country".

There was a sharp decline in the number of deceased donors in 2014 from its previous year, 63 as compared with 86 in 2013. In total 251 people received organ transplants in 2014 as compared with 294 in 2013.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of heart transplantation and the 10th anniversary of lung transplantation at the Mater Hospital. In 2014, despite a poor organ donation rate, the Mater Hospital surpassed itself for heart and lung transplantation with a record year for transplantation with a total of 49 operations taking place, 31 lung and 18 heart transplants.

Last year was a record year for paediatric kidney transplants in Ireland with a total of 19 children receiving kidney transplants. Now only 16 children are receiving dialysis treatment, 11 less than a year ago.

However, at the end of 2014 there were 74 more adults on dialysis than a year earlier reflecting the poor kidney transplanting figures of 2014 because of the low number of deceased organ donors.

Mr. Murphy thanked the Minister for Health for removing the financial disincentive for living kidney donors by introducing a protocol for reimbursement of their expenses which he said “was a milestone for living transplantation”.

Since the Living Donor Kidney Programme commenced at Beaumont Hospital eight years ago a total of 195 living donor kidney transplants have taken place. Nowadays a quarter of all kidney transplants are from living donors with a record 40 being carried out last year.

Recognising the selfless act of organ donation by grieving families, Mr. Murphy said that “Organ Donation, following death in the very specific circumstances required for it to be considered, should be seen as normal”. He said that as part of its remit, the new Organ Donation and Transplant Ireland (ODTI) has been tasked with making organ donation a normality and that the Irish Kidney Association, which has for over three decades promoted organ donation, looks forward to partnering with the HSE’s ODTI to further expand organ donation thus leading to more organ transplants. This year the ODTI will take over all organ procurement which has been the responsibility of Beaumont Hospital. The dedicated staff at Beaumont who developed the service over 28 years will remain in posts as kidney transplant co-ordinators.

Beaumont Hospital conducted 158 transplant operations in 2014, of which 112 were kidney transplants from deceased donors, 6 included a pancreas and a record 40 transplants were from living kidney donors.

There are 4172 people in Ireland with failed kidneys, 2278 or 55% are transplanted and 1894 or 45% are on dialysis. Mr. Murphy said that “very few countries in the world can boast that they have such a positive balance towards transplantation.”

At the end of 2014 there were 597 people in the kidney transplant waiting pools and combined with heart, lung and liver the total number of people awaiting transplantation is over 700.

St. Vincent’s Hospital conducted 44 liver transplants in 2014, 20% less than in 2013.

The liver is the only organ that travels both ways between Ireland and the UK for patients on the super urgent waiting lists.

The 2015 Organ Donor Awareness Week campaign will feature broadcaster Mary Kennedy in radio advertising as well as on posters, encouraging the public to support organ donation.

The focus of Organ Donor Awareness Week is to raise awareness about the ongoing and ever increasing demand for transplantation which relies on the public for organ donation. Families need to talk together and keep the reminders of their willingness to donate visible by carrying the organ **donor card**, downloading the **Smartphone App** and permitting **Code 115** to be included on their **driver’s licence**.

Organ Donor Awareness Week also serves as a fundraising exercise for the Irish Kidney Association. Throughout the Week (28th March- 4th April, 2015), the Association’s volunteers will be out on the streets, and in shopping centres throughout the country, selling 'forget-me-not-flower' emblems, brooches, pens and shopping trolley discs. All proceeds will go towards the Irish Kidney Association’s aid for patients on dialysis and those patients fortunate enough to have received a kidney transplant. The Irish Kidney Association’s charitable activities include the provision of a 13 double bedroom free accommodation facility for patients and their families in the grounds of Beaumont Hospital and holiday centres located in Tramore and Kerry, together with patient advocacy, advice, financial aid and rehabilitative, health promotion and the provision of kidney patient information and education. This year the IKA is introducing another fundraising technique. **You can text “kidney” to 50300 and €2 will be donated from your mobile phone account to the IKA.**

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European Transplant Games – Press Release 26th August, 2012

www.ika.ie/press-release-26th-august-2012

IRELAND IN TOP THREE MEDALS TABLE AT EUROPEAN TRANSPLANT GAMES WITH SPECIAL AWARD FOR BEST FEMALE ATHLETE



An air of celebration and pride swept through Dublin Airport's arrivals hall on Saturday night, 25th August, when Transplant Team Ireland arrived home with 50 medals. The brave athletes breezed through Terminal 2 adorned with their impressive haul from the 7th European Transplant & Dialysis Games in Zagreb, Croatia.

Members of the 26-strong team were greeted with a rapturous welcome by family, friends and supporters celebrating their achievement in winning 14 Gold, 15 Silver and 21 Bronze. This scoop placed Ireland in 3rd place on the medals table after France and Slovenia out of 28 participating countries.

Further cause for celebration was that newcomer to the team Alison Honner was announced 'Best Female Athlete on Dialysis' at the Games' Gala Dinner closing ceremony. The 26 year-old from Pike-of-Rushall, Portlaoise demonstrated great spirit and determination at the Games securing a Silver for Bowling and Bronze in Badminton as well as a category Gold medal in a Bowling doubles event along with Athenry woman, Linda Waters.

One of the highlights of the homecoming for the team was to see Transplant Surgeon David Hickey in the welcoming party and it was particularly heartening for a number of the athletes who had their kidney transplants conducted by the former 1970s Dublin Football All-Star. Mr Hickey described the athletes as 'true Corinthians and more'.

Speaking about her complete surprise in being awarded 'Best Female Athlete on Dialysis' at the Games, Alison Honner, said, "I'm overwhelmed. It's a privilege to win such an award and to come home with the award and medals is fantastic. Not only am I thrilled, I'm over the moon".

Commenting about the Games experience, Team Manager Colin White said, "we received a warm welcome in Croatia with temperatures regularly reaching over 40 degrees throughout the week. Notwithstanding, the Irish team kept its cool to pull off some great performances. The team was family to us all with great support at every venue. The Games experience goes beyond simple sports competitions. The bond between competitors from all countries was palpable and the united desire to express appreciation to organ donors and their families was humbling. Transplant and dialysis sports is growing consistently in Ireland and we look forward to many more people joining our team in time for the 2013 World Transplant Games in Durban, South Africa."

The unique Games which promote organ donation and celebrate life through sport brought together 300 athletes from 28 European countries.

The biennial event was hailed as an outstanding success both on and off the sporting field as all those taking part were united in sharing a common and poignant bond. They all had suffered organ failure and many were embracing a second chance at life, while honouring their organ donors through sport.

The Games were held from August 18th to 25th and involved athletes who received organ transplants including heart, lung, liver, kidney and pancreas as well as people on dialysis.

The Irish team of athletes includes 17 men and 9 women, ranging in age from 18 to 74, from all over Ireland. The team includes 6 people who are receiving dialysis treatment as well as transplant recipients including 2 kidney and pancreas combined, 3 liver transplant recipients, and 15 kidney transplant recipients.

Athletes competed in badminton, tennis, cycling, darts, golf, petanque, swimming, table tennis, ten-pin bowling, volleyball, mini-marathon and track and field events.

Transplant Team Ireland Games Manager Colin White said, "just as our Olympians on their return from London 2012 wished us good luck and success, we would also like to pass on our best wishes to our Paralympics Team at the Games which commence later this week."

Members of Transplant Team Ireland are as follows:-

Antrim: John McAleer, Newtownabbey.

Cork: Mike Keohane, Roscarbery; Charlie Ryan, Cobh; Catherine Murphy, Aghabullogue; and Anne Lankester, Roscarbery

Clare: Eoghan O'Neill, Newmarket-on-Fergus (now living in Limerick)

Donegal: Noel McGeever, Letterkenny

Galway: Maura O’Sullivan, Kilcolgan; and Linda Waters, Athenry.

Kildare: James Nolan, The Curragh.

Laois: Alison Honner, Portlaoise; Niall McAuliffe, Abbeyleix; and Robbie Lyons (youngest team member), the Swan, via Athy.

Limerick: John Loftus, Clarina.

Offaly: Declan Guing, Edenderry

Roscommon: Monica Finn, Roscommon town. and Shane Lafferty, Monksland, Athlone.

Sligo: Bridie Nicholson, Sligo town and Megan Fahy from Toonaphubble.

Tipperary: Sheila Gegan, Nenagh.

Dublin: Leonard Ryan, Tallaght, D.24; James Reynolds, Tallaght, D.24, Paul Prendergast, Santry Avenue, D.9; Owen Kelleher, Lucan; Peter Heffernan, Skerries and **Team Captain**, Harry Ward, Baldoyle, D.13;

Team Medical Director Yvonne Ryan

Team Physiotherapist Clare Hogan

Team Manager Colin White

A team blog was set up where supporters could follow the Irish Team’s progress

www.transplantteamireland.wordpress.com

The 8th European Transplant & Dialysis Games will be held in Krakow, Poland in 2014.

The Irish Kidney Association is responsible for organising the Irish Team’s involvement at Transplant & Dialysis Games. It receives no government funding for its sports programme and many of the athletes fundraise to cover their costs in taking part.

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PRESS RELEASE 17th August, 2012

www.ika.ie/press-release-17th-august-2012

Olympic medallists urge Transplant Team to 'go for gold'
as

Messages of support abound for brave athletes who fly out to
European Transplant & Dialysis Games in Croatia



Katie Taylor and her fellow Irish Olympians were amongst the many well-wishers who sent messages of support to the 26 brave athletes who will fly out to Zagreb, Croatia today for the 7th European Transplant & Dialysis Games. Hoping to emulate the recent success of our Olympians at London 2012, 17 men and 9 women, will represent their country and celebrate life through sport as well as promote organ donation.

Ranging in age from 18 to 74, Transplant Team Ireland will be the biggest team to compete at the forthcoming Games which will take place from 18th – 25th August and will involve over 300 athletes from 28 countries throughout Europe. The Irish athletes gathered for a pre-departure reception at the Clarion Hotel, Dublin Airport earlier today encouraged by the many letters of support they received and which are now proudly posted on the team blog www.transplantteamireland.wordpress.com. Members of the public can also offer messages of support in its Guestbook.

A letter from **Team Ireland – London Olympics 2012** said, “we’ve had a great Olympics in London, thanks to the support of everyone, including the entire Transplant team. Now it is our turn to say ‘go for gold’ and we hope our Transplant athletes will come back with lots of

medals and personal bests. Here's to a superb event and lots of success. From Sonia, Katie, John Joe, Paddy, Michael, Cian, Annalise, Rob and Team Ireland – London 2012”.

Other well-wishers included the **inspirational explorer, adventure athlete and author Mark Pollock** who wrote, “as the Irish Team prepare for the European Transplant & Dialysis Games I want to pass on my best wishes to all the athletes. As a former able bodied athlete who has continued to compete after acquiring both blindness and paralysis, I understand how important competitive sport is for the health of the body and mind. Enjoy the competition, enjoy the hardship and enjoy the glory.”

Endorsements also came from the sporting body Athletics Ireland, the Minister for Sport and Tourism, medical professionals, the transplant community and the general public.

The Minister for Sport & Tourism Leo Varadkar, in wishing the team luck at the Games, said that “each of you have persevered along a difficult path to get to this stage. It is a tremendous honour that you as athletes, your families and friends should be very proud of. I am certain that all 26 athletes will be marvelous ambassadors for Ireland, representing both your country and your sport with honour and pride. As well as competing at the Games you are also highlighting the enormous benefits that organ donation and transplant brings.”

In a letter from **Athletics Ireland, Mr. John Foley, Chief Executive** said that he agreed with a comment by Transplant Surgeon and former seventies football All Star David Hickey when he gave a motivational talk to Transplant Team Ireland referring to them as “true Corinthians and more”. Mr Foley said “I agree totally with this description and commend you and all the people involved in the Irish Kidney Association for your work in supporting the team and for your on-going support of patients and their families affected by kidney disease”.

Director of the National Organ Donation & Transplantation Office, Prof. Jim Egan, in his message of encouragement said “it is testament to the courage of families of the donors and recipients that this event is taking place with a strong Irish representation”. Prof. Egan’s letter also commended “the efforts of Intensive Care Staff around the country who underpin the transplant services in Beaumont Hospital, St. Vincent’s University Hospital and the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital”. Prof. Egan asserted that the Irish Team’s participation at the Games “is a huge mark of respect to Irish citizens who participate in a strong culture of organ donation”.

Speaking about the forthcoming European Games, **Mr. Colin White, Team Manager** said, “we are delighted with the support we have received from all sections of the community. I am excited about this year’s Games in Zagreb. The Irish Team has a great reputation for fair play and strong competitiveness at international events. Our team of 26 competitors, including 6 newcomers, has prepared well and we are looking forward to joining our friends from across Europe in celebrating life through sport. The message from these Games is clear – Organ Donation Works! I encourage the public to Think About It, Talk About It and make a commitment to Organ Donation.”

Team Captain Harry Ward from Baldoyle, Dublin has represented Ireland at numerous international Games events both as a dialysis patient and in more recent years as a transplant recipient thanks to his kidney transplant which he received in 2007.

Athletes will compete in badminton, tennis, cycling, darts, golf, petanque, swimming, table tennis, ten pin bowling, tennis, volleyball, mini-marathon and track and field events.

Supporters can follow the Irish team's progress and post messages of support in a guestbook on a blog www.transplantteamireland.wordpress.com Further information can also be obtained from the Games website www.etdg2012zagreb.com

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*The team will arrive home from the European Games at approximately 11.20pm on
Saturday night, 25th August into Terminal Two at Dublin airport on an Aer Lingus flight from
Budapest (EI0679).*

IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION CONCERNED OVER REDUCTION IN KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS IN 2015

The Irish Kidney Association described the rate of deceased organ donors for 2015 as above average. We are delighted that so many lung, heart and liver transplants were performed but concerned that not as many kidney transplants were performed considering the amount of deceased organ donors.

In 2014, there were 112 deceased kidney transplants from 63 donors. In 2015 with 81 donors there were 120 deceased kidney transplants. This represents a significant decline in utilisation of available kidneys. It is evident that this will require further investigation to understand exactly why this has come about. For the first time in the “modern Living Donor Kidney Transplant Programme” fewer kidney transplants were performed than the previous year. For 2015 there were a total of 153 kidney transplants performed which is well short of the 2011 peak of 192 kidney transplants and below average. One could only describe as “very disappointing” is the situation of zero pancreas transplantation in 2015. Successive date promises have come and gone. It is not a simple project to develop a new organ transplant programme and St. Vincent’s Hospital have had similar, but different, transplant surgeon recruitment issues to Beaumont Hospital. All want a safe, robust, sustainable Pancreas Transplant Programme to emerge but frustration abounds that successive setbacks are occurring.

Predicting that 2016 will see the restart of pancreas transplantation is something I am not going to take for granted. It seems that for every step forward, some impediment appears to push the programme backward. In Beaumont Hospital the shortage of kidney transplant surgeons is taking its toll but credit is due to the performances of the existing team of surgeons who have managed to achieve these numbers while so understaffed.

Should the HSE now examine the strategy and wisdom of having only one kidney transplanting hospital in the country? A second hospital would alleviate the obvious pressures that exist within Beaumont Hospital. In the interim period the HSE could contract a UK Hospital to perform a number of living kidney donor transplants (perhaps Belfast city).

Kidney transplantation as we all know provides significant extended mortality and quality of life to patients and is also far more cost effective than maintaining a patient on dialysis.

These ideas are worth considering especially when the number of patients on kidney dialysis will just continue to grow and grow and already stands at almost 2000 people in Ireland.

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