

PRESS RELEASE 29th December 2022

IKA APPRAISAL OF PRELIMINARY END OF YEAR FIGURES FOR ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION

The Irish Kidney Association (IKA) welcomes the publication of preliminary organ donation and transplantation figures for 2022 by the HSE's Organ Donation Transplant Ireland office. We are heartened to hear of the increase in organ donations and transplants compared to 2021 and 2020, starting to return to near pre-covid activity/levels. The IKA acknowledges the kindness and generosity of the 86 deceased donors, and their families, who, in a time of great sorrow and personal pain, have thought of those in need of an organ transplant. The 33 living kidney donors in 2022 should also be applauded for stepping forward to help a family member or friend.

	2022	2021		5 year Average 2015-19
Deceased Donors	86	65		85
Kidney				
Kidney	163*	104		128
Liver	51	35		61
Lungs	18	20		33
Heart	10	10		16
Pancreas	8	2		2
Total Deceased Donor Transplants				
	217	171		240
Living Donors	33	35		43
TOTAL TRANSPLANTS				
	250	206		283
Organs per Deceased Donor				
	2.52	2.63		2.84

* 130 deceased kidney donor transplants plus 33 living kidney donor transplants.

While welcoming the increase in transplantation numbers, the IKA believes the underpinning infrastructure is still fragile. For example, the November 2021 incident where an organ donation was not used due to a lack of resources. We await the recommendations of the investigation into this incident.

The increase in kidney transplants from the pre COVID-19 five-year period, 2015 to 2019 average of 128 to 163 in 2022 is very encouraging. However, living donor kidney transplants have yet to return to pre COVID-19 levels. (33 living kidney transplants in 2022, compared to an average of 43 in the 2015 to 2019 period).

It is disappointing to see that the levels of heart and lung transplants have not recovered to pre COVID-19 activity levels and it would be interesting to understand the reasons for this.

After the pause in the pancreas transplant programme some years ago, it is encouraging to see the increase in pancreas transplants, moving from an average of two in the pre COVID-19 period to eight in 2022.

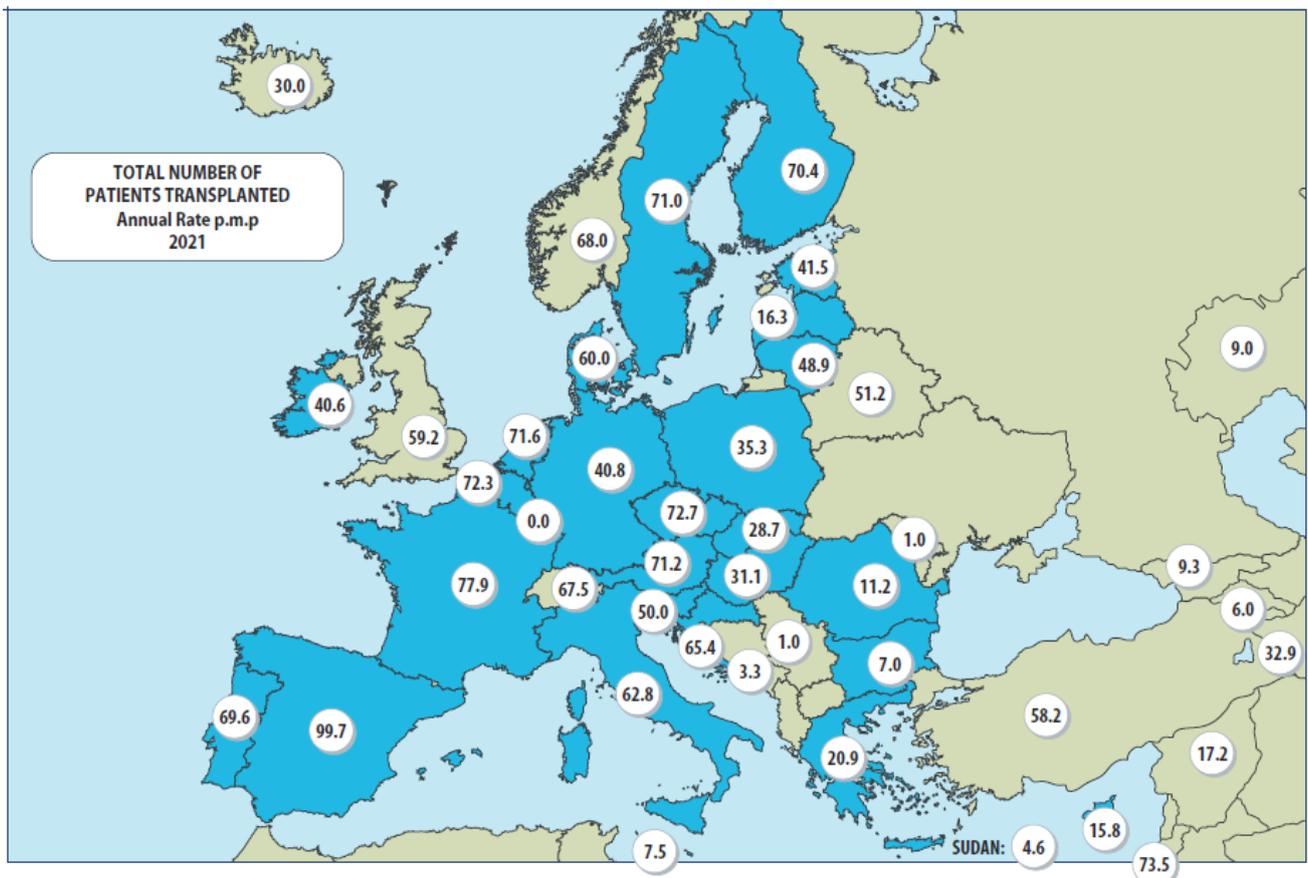
The publication of the Human Tissue Bill, (which has yet to be passed into law), is a major step forward in replacing the outdated Anatomy Act 1832. When transposed into law, how this proposed new legislation will be communicated to the public will be vital in ensuring the public are aware that organ donation is still subject to family consent, unless the loved one has previously opted out by entering details on the proposed new national opt out register. The proposed new legislation will also allow for altruistic living kidney donation where there is no relationship between the recipient and the organ donor. Currently such donors have to travel outside our jurisdiction to Northern Ireland or overseas in order to donate altruistically.

Commenting on the 2022 preliminary figures, Ms. Carol Moore, Chief Executive of the Irish Kidney Association said, "I commend all those involved in the health service for the continuance of transplant activity under hugely difficult circumstances as we recover from the impact of COVID-19, with ongoing shortages in staffing, theatre spaces and beds.

The generosity of spirit of the families of 86 deceased organ donor families has made it possible in their time of grief for 217 people to receive transplant operations in 2022. We also recognise the generosity of 33 living kidney donors who stepped forward to transform the lives of their family members and friends. As a result of both deceased and living donation, a total of 250 organ transplant operations took place throughout 2022 up until 29th December.

Looking at the Council of Europe transplant report of 2021, at 40.6 transplants per million population (p.m.p.), Ireland compares well to the likes of Latvia at 16.3 p.m.p. but is well below the rates achieved in countries like Spain (99.7) or the UK (59.2) or Croatia with a similar sized population which is at 65.4 p.m.p.

Council of Europe Report, Total number of patients transplanted in 2021 (Link below)



Ms. Moore stated, “We welcome the commencement of the potential organ donor audit pilot which will identify all opportunities to donate and transplant.”

“The Irish Kidney Association is calling for publication of detailed data on seeking consent for organ donation in our hospitals nationwide and also more transparency around transplant waiting lists. We need more clarity about the reasons why more transplant operations are not taking place in Ireland. ”

“In the UK, a detailed report is available on each step of the process that results in organ donation and transplantation. (*See extract below*). No such data is published in Ireland. This means we do not know what key actions are required to improve transplant rates.”

Today's press release by ODTI states. “*At any one time, around 500 people are waiting for a transplant*”. The Irish Kidney Association believes that there is a need for increased transparency on the criteria for patients to be accepted or removed from transplant waiting lists for heart, lung, liver, kidney and pancreas. For example, there are over 2,000 patients with End Stage Kidney Disease receiving dialysis treatment in Ireland. Approximately 20% of these patients are on the transplant waiting list.

“The HSE’s National Renal Office has reported that since the arrival of COVID-19 that one in three patients that end up in ICU as a result of COVID-19 have Acute Kidney Injury and require

temporary dialysis. Some of these patients will not recover their kidney function and will end up on long-term dialysis or will hopefully get a transplant, particularly those with pre-existing kidney disease. The long-term impact of COVID-19 on organ function has yet to be understood.

“Because people on dialysis typically must attend a dialysis unit for treatment three times a week, every week, for many of them holidaying with their family within Ireland is not an option due to all the dialysis units in the country operating at or near full capacity. This means no visiting family or friends outside of the catchment area of their regular dialysis unit. For some people, this means not being able to visit elderly parents at Christmas. In contrast, holiday dialysis for our patients who can travel abroad is very possible in countries across the European continent and beyond, but such holidays are not within everyone’s financial reach. The IKA facilitates the required paperwork for holiday dialysis for those who can afford such breaks and in 2022 we facilitated 132 holidays abroad.”

Ms. Moore concluded, “The IKA’s key message to the public will continue to focus on the importance of sharing your organ donation wishes with your family as they are the people who will be asked for final consent for organ retrieval to take place”.

Organ Donor Cards can be obtained by phoning the Irish Kidney Association on 01 6205306 or Free text DONOR to 50050. You can also visit the website at www.ika.ie/get-a-donor-card cards or download a free digital organ donor card APP to your phone. You can also indicate your decision to donate by having Code 115 added to your Driver’s Licence.

-ENDS-

[Link to Council of Europe report](#)

Continues overleaf

UK Extract from Annual Activity report from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Table 13.15 Reasons why consented/authorised eligible donors did not proceed to donate, 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, by donor type

Primary reason why donation did not proceed	Donor type				Total	
	DBD		DCD		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Clinical - Outside of donation criteria at referral	0	-	3	1.2	3	0.8
Clinical - Absolute contraindication to organ donation	8	7.1	3	1.2	11	2.9
Clinical - No transplantable organ	8	7.1	13	5.0	21	5.6
Clinical - Patient's general medical condition	2	1.8	4	1.5	6	1.6
Clinical - Patient actively dying	4	3.5	5	1.9	9	2.4
Clinical - Considered high risk donor	5	4.4	2	0.8	7	1.9
Clinical - DCD clinical exclusion	0	-	1	0.4	1	0.3
Clinical - Patient asystolic	2	1.8	1	0.4	3	0.8
Clinical - Patient expected to die before donation could take place attendance not required	6	5.3	7	2.7	13	3.5
Clinical - PTA post WLST	0	-	109	41.9	109	29.2
Clinical - Organs deemed medically unsuitable by recipient centres	34	30.1	73	28.1	107	28.7
Clinical - Organs deemed medically unsuitable on surgical inspection	15	13.3	1	0.4	16	4.3
Clinical - Positive virology	4	3.5	1	0.4	5	1.3
Clinical - Other	8	7.1	3	1.2	11	2.9
Consent / Auth - Coroner/Procurator fiscal refusal	10	8.8	12	4.6	22	5.9
Consent / Auth - NOK withdraw consent / authorisation	1	0.9	11	4.2	12	3.2
Consent / Auth - Family placed conditions on donation	1	0.9	0	-	1	0.3
Logistical - No critical care bed available	0	-	1	0.4	1	0.3
Logistical - Other	5	4.4	10	3.8	15	4.0
TOTAL	113	100	260	100	373	100



See full report at [Annual Activity Report - ODT Clinical - NHS Blood and Transplant 2020/2021](#)

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