

THE DAISY CHAIN

Newsletter about Living Kidney Donation at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation

DONOR SPOTLIGHT - CRAIG

In this issue NHS worker Craig tells the unique story of how he decided to become a living kidney donor, and donated a kidney to a complete stranger.

“Kidney donation is something I’d given idle consideration to for quite a while – as a platelet donor it always seemed like the next logical step. One of the areas that I regularly clean at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals has a large stand advertising organ donation, and gradually the messaging began to have an effect on me. I was booked in for tests, primarily to ensure that I was healthy enough to donate and that my kidneys were functioning well enough to make it worthwhile to pass on to someone else. I really think the hospital ended up with enough of my blood to keep the canteen in black puddings for a month! There was no real anxiety through all this. I think the only worry I had was the fear that the tests would highlight something which would mean I’d be unable to donate.

I told my family and some of my friends what I was planning to do. The responses were a mixed bag. Pride, amazement, shock and disagreement to name but a few, but I knew that I’d have the love and support should I make it through the tests.

“The results came back and I was given the all clear to donate. As an altruistic donor I had no idea who would receive my kidney. I’m not a great traveller, so the thought that a part of me would potentially travel further than I ever had always made me chuckle.

“It’s been around six months now since I went through with the procedure and I’m doing fine. I’ve been told that the recipient is also doing well and her body hasn’t rejected the new kidney, which is great news. People do ask me why I did it and I usually give the jokey response of ‘chicks dig scars.’ To be honest, it’s a difficult question to answer. The closest reason I can think of is...it’s the right thing to do.”

Visit the website to find out more about living donation:

<https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/become-a-living-donor/>

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...A LIVING DONOR COORDINATOR

“Alarm set for 6.00am. Children prepared for an early start as it’s ‘transplant day’. I wake nervous and relieved the day has finally come for the donor and recipient - it’s a rollercoaster ride for them and their families to get to this point.

“I call the ward before leaving home to make sure both are OK and haven’t had any problems overnight. When I arrive at the hospital I change quickly into scrubs and head to the ward with Lisa, the Transplant Practitioner. We visit the donor and recipient and make small talk while waiting for the theatre staff to collect the donor.

“When the surgeon is happy with the kidney he bags it and passes it to me - this is my favourite part. We have all worked so hard to coordinate this transplant and now here it is in my hands.”

Caroline, Living Donor Coordinator

“This is the most emotional part, as the donor is wheeled off to theatre. Lisa stays at the donor’s side and holds their hand while they are anaesthetised. I reassure the recipient and the donor’s

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“I still clean the area where the ‘please donate’ stand is displayed. Hopefully it’ll inspire someone else to do so.”
Craig – Altruistic Donor

Living donors make miracles happen!
1 in 3 transplants in the UK comes from a living donor

family, before heading off to theatre with the kidney box filled with ice, ready for safe removal of the kidney. The theatre falls quiet as the surgeon gets ready to remove the kidney, which is then swiftly inspected by the recipient’s surgeon. I watch eagerly as the perfusion fluid goes through the kidney, ready to be transplanted.

When the surgeon is happy with the kidney he bags it and passes it to me - this is my favourite part. We have all worked so hard to coordinate this transplant, and now here it is in my hands. I then pack the kidney, and the atmosphere in the theatre is always a little more tense, as we prepare it for the next part of its journey.

“We inform the recipient and donors’ families that all has gone well, and the donor goes to recovery as the recipient is called to theatre. I text my colleague Debbie, who I job share with, at home to let her know all has gone well - I know she will have been thinking about it, as I do when it’s the other way round and she is working.....continued on page 2

“Only when the recipient is in theatre can I relax a little and take in what we have achieved.

It is such a privilege to be part of a team that makes this happen, and more so to work with such amazing donors and recipients.” – *Caroline, Living Donor Coordinator*



TRANSPLANTING DURING A PANDEMIC



Dr Ravi Pararajasingam: Reflections of a Consultant Transplant Surgeon during the Covid-19 pandemic.

On the 11th March 2020, Covid-19 - a previously unknown virus which can cause serious respiratory illness was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation.

At this time the transplant team were continuing to support patients to make the best decisions on accepting a transplant when offered one, carefully discussing the potential risks and benefits

The last transplant I performed before transplantation was put on pause took place on World Kidney Day, 12th March. After long discussions, a couple who were struggling due to the chronic kidney disease of one partner, decided to go ahead and the spouse of the living donor received a transplant. It was fantastic to see the couple recover well and say it ‘was the best thing they ever did’.

In the week that followed, the pandemic took grip in the UK. On the 23rd March, the UK government announced a lockdown and shielding for vulnerable patients - many transplant units in the UK suspended activities.

On the 26th March 2020 we suspended transplantation.

The following months of April and May were surreal. Our organisation worked hard.

“Our organisation worked hard. I saw kindness and support to colleagues and patients, and strong team discussions on plans to re-open our transplant unit in Sheffield. Working as a team, we created a safe ways to recommence transplantation.”

I saw kindness and support to colleagues and patients, and strong team discussions on plans to safely re-open our transplant unit in Sheffield.

By August the pandemic was becoming better controlled, the Government lifted shielding restrictions for many people and Covid-19 cases in the community were reducing. Again after careful consideration we made the decision to expand the patients whose transplantation could be progressed and on the 27th August 2020 I performed the first living donor since March. We have now opened all aspects of our transplant programme again.

Finally, this has been an unprecedented time and it has shown that we are all human and have vulnerabilities. Modern medicine has come a long way, but we still have the challenge of responding to new information about this virus and its impact including of course the unknown. We haven’t yet seen the end of Covid-19 and we all have a responsibility to be vigilant and follow the guidance for limiting any further spread. It is clear that very person has a story and has been impacted by this pandemic - we will help and support each other to get through this.



“We spoke to the Consultant that afternoon and he discussed whether we still wanted to proceed or not, due to the pandemic and the risks to the both of us. We decided to go ahead and are so glad that we did. The best thing we have done all year.”
Dr Pararajasingam’s patients



the Sheffield Area **Kidney** Association

www.saka.org.uk/



Registered Charity No. 1089702

www.sheffieldhospitalscharity.org.uk/

To find out more about living donation contact Sheffield Teaching Hospitals’ living donor programme on 0114 271 2983 or email sth.livingdonation@nhs.net