

2019

Organ donation is a rare event

Not everyone can become an organ donor when they die. To be an organ donor, a person must die in a hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) or emergency department (ED) and be medically assessed as suitable to donate organs for transplantation.

≈ 2%

Only around 2% of people who die in Australian hospitals can be considered for organ donation

Australia's potential deceased organ donor population and transplantation outcomes

Around 80,000 people die in Australian hospitals each year but only around 2% of them can be considered for organ donation.

In Australia the family is always asked to consent to donation. Requests to families for donation were made in 1,224 cases, with 756 families saying 'yes'. This represents a consent rate of 62%.

The 548 deceased organ donors and their families saved and transformed the lives of 1,444 organ recipients.

~80,000
deaths in hospital¹

1,309
potential organ donors²

1,224
requests²

756
consents³

548
donors³

1,444
recipients³

In 2019, 1,309 potential organ donors were identified. These people had progressed to end-of-life care in ICU or ED and were assessed as medically suitable to donate organs for transplantation following their death.

Of the 756 consented donors, 548 became donors – 208 did not become donors mainly due to medical and logistical reasons.

There were around 1,700 Australians waitlisted for an organ transplant at the end of 2019 and a further 12,000 on dialysis who may benefit from a kidney transplant.

With donation possible in so few cases, and with so many people needing an organ transplant, it is vital more people in the potential donor pool say 'yes' to donation.

If more people say 'yes' to organ donation, more transplants will occur.

Sources

- 1 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019. Admitted patient care 2017–18: Australian hospital statistics. Health services series no. 90. Cat. no. HSE 225. Canberra: AIHW.
- 2 DonateLife Audit, January 2020
- 3 Deceased organ donation in Australia, Australia and New Zealand Organ Donor Registry, January 2020