

DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION OF ORGANS AND TISSUES IN SLOVENIA IN 2021

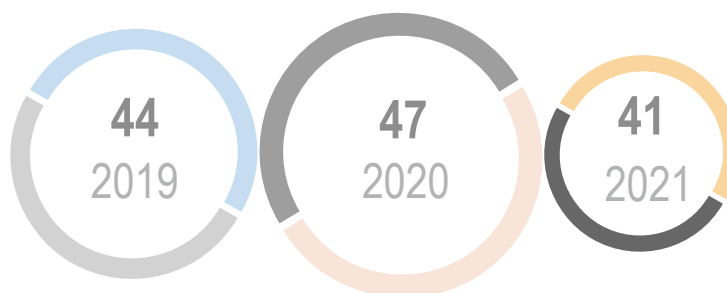
Ljubljana, 11. 2. 2022

FACTSHEET

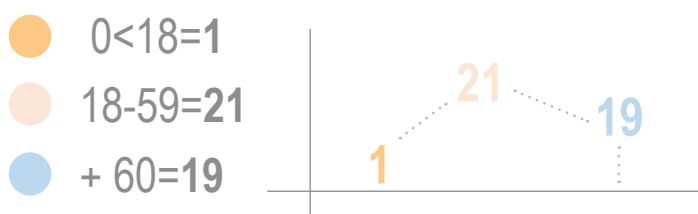
Despite many challenges we have been facing due to the persistent covid-19 health crisis, we managed to assure active donation and transplantation programmes in Slovenia. Compared to 2020, we had fewer donors and transplantations of solid organs, but given the exhaustion of health care workers in extreme working circumstances in intensive care units, we are satisfied with the result. With 18.5 actual donors per million inhabitants, Slovenia ranked 4th among the eight countries in the Eurotransplant region. We are pleased to have obtained very high share of consent for donation. As many as 84% of relatives of the deceased gave their consent to donation. Despite unfavorable social and health situation, there is a lot of good in people. Trust in the national organ donation system has not been diminished.

On this occasion we would also like to announce the changes of the Slovenija-transplant's leadership. In December 2021 the term of leading expired to Danica Avsec, MD. She has been a long-time director and driving force of the development of the institute since its establishment in 2000. With the team, she developed high quality, efficient and ethically oriented national donor system in Slovenia, considered as an example of good practice in the international environment. In terms of the number of deceased donors Slovenia ranks among the most successful countries in the world. Through activities in European projects and in international bodies, Danica Avsec reached professional recognition in the international professional public. She added, »I am especially proud of the respectable cooperation with the media and other professions that create public opinion on organ donation. We have gained admirable public trust in the national donation system, the majority of relatives gives consent to donation.« Avsec further explains, the current turbulent times are challenging: »Society and medicine are changing rapidly. In donation medicine new techniques and improved diagnostics

Deceased donors

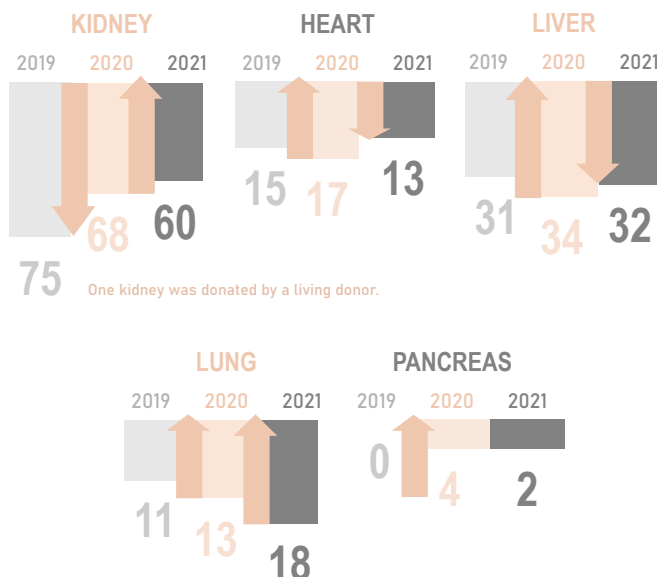


Deceased donors in 2021 - age groups



* Average age of deceased donors was 54 years (5 less compared to 2020).

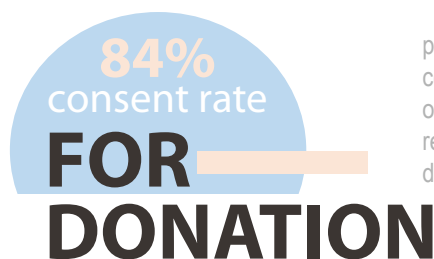
Donors donated 125 solid organs



are available, and donation after cardiac death is already established abroad. I am pleased that my successor will, with the knowledge, experience and responsibility he has already demonstrated, continue with the development orientation of the institute and upgrade the donation system in our country. «

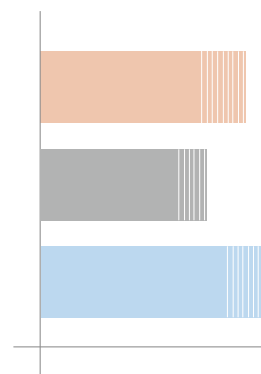
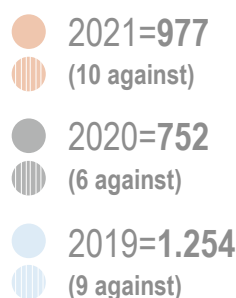
As of January 1, 2022, Andrej Gadžijev, MD, specialist traumatologist, long-term associate of Slovenia-transplant and one of the few experts in the field of donor medicine in our country has been appointed as a new director. »In many ways, I will continue with the work and vision set by my predecessor, Danica Avsec. One of my goals is to introduce donation after circulatory death in Slovenian system based on clear ethical and professional foundations,« explains Gadžijev, who will focus on systemic innovations, optimization of decision-making procedures, strengthening the medical team and expanding the donor program. With measures and innovations, he aims at achieving a stable increase in the number of deceased donors. Gadžijev continues: »These are steps towards better self-sufficiency. In similar emergencies like the epidemic, we could be faced with closed borders, when the survival of our patients would depend solely on the national donor program.« Further, he would like to introduce visible upgrades in the field of tissue and cell donation. »We will do our best to enable patients a quality and safe treatment with tissues and cells obtained from our donors.« Gadžijev will continue the tradition of good collaboration and connection between the donor and the recipient program. He stresses: »In Slovenia, we have excellent transplant experts at the University Medical Center Ljubljana. Patients are well managed before the transplants and are monitored for a life-time after the procedure. With the achievements in heart, lung and kidney transplants, we rank among the best in the world, which is a remarkable success of Slovenian healthcare.« Gadžijev concludes optimistically: »I am convinced that with transparent communication with the public, and good co-operation of all professionals, we will manage to effectively upgrade the deceased donor program in Slovenia and continue to provide transplant treatment to all in need.«

Consent rate for organ and tissue donation



* Transplant coordinators performed 55 explanatory conversations with relatives of the deceased. 84% of relatives gave consent for donation.

National register for donation declarations



AGE	NR. OF DECLARATIONS	IN 2021
<18	13	9
19-28	2.263	341
29-38	3.162	304
39-48	2.538	170
49-58	1.753	112
>59	1.856	41

* Compared to the year 2020 we achieved better results in term of people enrolled in the national register of designated persons. The percentage of enrollment through electronic system has grown. Only 10 people have declared against deceased organ donation.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021

- The number of deceased donors and organ transplants was lower compared to 2020. But given the extreme working conditions and the overburdening of staff in intensive care units, the results are good.
- Transplant coordinators conducted 55 interviews with the relatives of the deceased. 84% of relatives gave their consent for the removal, which is a remarkable result in the health and social crisis. High consent rate indicates, confidence in the organ donation system has not been shaken.
- In recent years, Slovenia has been a world leader in the number of transplanted hearts PMP. For the last two years, the lung transplantation programme has been highly successful. Transplants are performed at the Center for Transplantation at the University Medical Center Ljubljana.

Slovenija-transplant

For over 20 years, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for the Transplantation of Organs and Tissues Slovenija-transplant has been the central national competent authority for connecting, co-ordinating, promoting and supervising donor and transplant activity in Slovenia. Slovenija-transplant is the primary co-ordination office of the national transplantation network, which consists of 11 donor hospitals across Slovenia, the Transplantation Centre at the Ljubljana University Medical Centre, and the Tissue Typing Centre within the Blood Transfusion Centre of Slovenia.

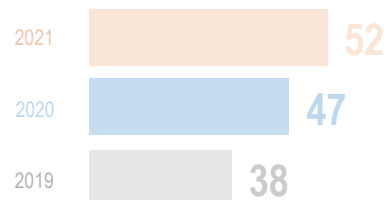
The Institute has been constantly developing in line with international guidelines and high ethical standards. It sets an internationally recognised example of how a national donor programme should be organised and managed. The key principles are: self-sufficiency – patient equality and safety – optimal effectiveness – quality – traceability – professionalism – non-commercialism – transparency – voluntary donation – prevention of abuse.

TRANSPLANTATIONS OF SOLID ORGANS

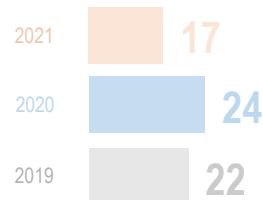
In 2021, 105 organ transplants were performed at the transplantation centre at the University medical centre Ljubljana.

Number of transplanted solid organs

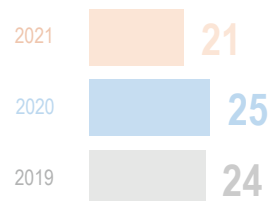
KIDNEY



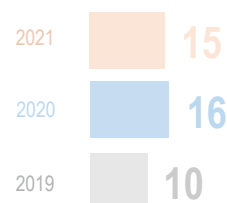
HEART



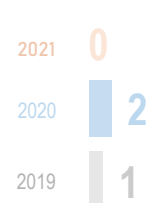
LIVER



LUNG



PANCREAS



2021= TOTAL 105 2020 = TOTAL 114 2019 = TOTAL 95

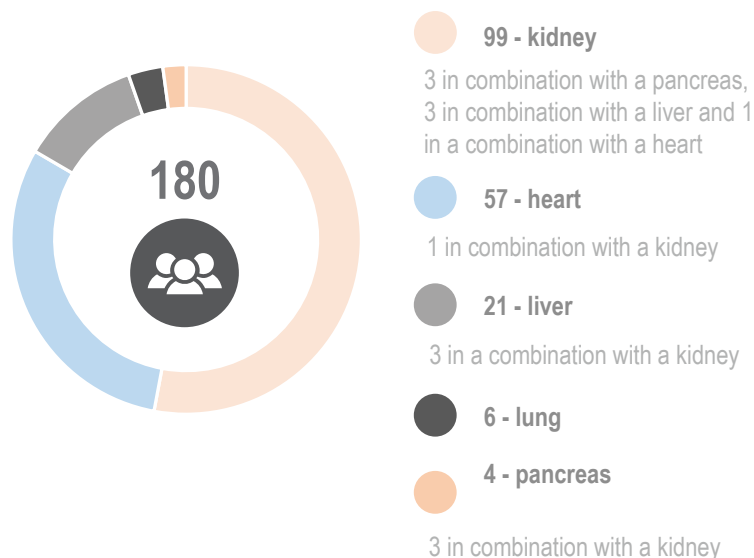
CORNEA



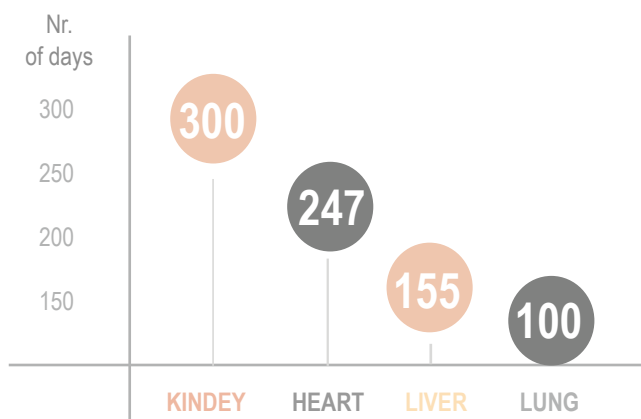
- We have improved the system of tissue donation and thus significantly reduced the waiting list for corneal transplants and enabled skin transplants.
- Compared to 2020, 225 more people enrolled in the national register for organ declarations. As many as 80% of enrolment were made through the electronic system.
- We communicated transparently and directly with the public, published more than 40 in-depth newspaper interviews and appeared in the media more than 260 times.
- Slovenija-transplant received an award at the public competition for the Best practice in health care in 2021 (ranking among the three finalists).
- In addition to Facebook and Twitter, we have opened communication on the YouTube channel (@SloTransplant). Organically we reached over 120,000 users on the Facebook platform.
- We have developed a national transplant information system to ensure the traceability of donated tissues and cells.
- As a partner in a consortium under the umbrella of ESOT, we succeeded in the EU-4Health tender and obtained funding for the 2.5-year project BRAVEST (*Building Resilience Against crisis: a systematic and global approach to adVancE body Safety and supply in Transplantation*).
- With the aim to promote research and development, we successfully conducted the first public competition for the best research work in the field of donor medicine.

Waiting list for organ transplantation

180 patients are on the national waiting list for transplantation (status on 5. 1. 2022).



Average waiting time (in days)



* In case of urgent transplantations, waiting time is significantly shorter.

slovenija



transplant

Zaloška 7, 1000 Ljubljana

www.slovenija-transplant.si

@SloTransplant   



* Eurotransplant manages communal waiting list for all patients in the member states. The year 2021 ended with 13,460 patients (2020: 14,020) active on the waiting list.

Source: SLOVENIJA-TRANSPLANT