



*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,  
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Romans 15:13*



# CMC NEWSLINE

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## Celebrating India's First Kidney Transplant



Shanmugam (Patient), Dr. Mohan Rao, Dr. Johny (Nephrologist), Dr. Martin Isaac (Anaesthetist), Dr. H.S. Bhat (Chief of Urology) and Nurse.

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 announces the 50<sup>th</sup> year since the first successful kidney transplant in CMC. The same day in the year 1971, a highly skilled team of doctors and nurses in CMC performed the first transplant which was a milestone in the nation's history of health care.

Dr. Mohan Rao recalls the incidents which led to the first transplant. Previously, in 1965 and 1966, three attempts were made at kidney transplantation; two in Mumbai and one in Varanasi. All three were unfortunately unsuccessful even though they were performed by senior doctors. Meanwhile in the southern part of the country, CMC was planning to begin its transplant programme. The planning and learning process was tedious and thorough. Dr. Chandy had deputed Dr. Mohan Rao and Dr. K.V. Johny to Adelaide, Australia where the first successful transplant had taken place in The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In 1970 after returning to Vellore they began planning the first kidney transplant in CMC. Dr. Mohan was cautioned by the then director Dr. Webb about the delicate nature and the significance of this first attempt. If the first attempt was unsuccessful, then there may be no more transplants in CMC, since patients may refuse to come. The team was asked to go ahead with the transplant with whatever was available. With no two operating theatres (one for the donor and the second for the recipient) Dr. Mohan started the operation around 7.00 pm and finished close to midnight.

"I stayed with the patient till morning as I had no trained transplant nurses - a practice I continued till the team gained confidence. The transplanted kidney started producing urine on table and continued. There were no complications and patient was discharged after two weeks. We did not announce the news but it has leaked somehow and was on All India Radio and local news paper by morning. We did another transplant three weeks later with good result. That was the start of Kidney Transplantation in India."

### "I Live With My Father's Kidney "- Excerpts from the thoughts of the first kidney transplant patient of CMC.

..."I was informed that Dr. M. Mohan Rao, who had been doing kidney transplant operations in Australia, was coming back to India to start the same work at Vellore. His arrival and subsequently accepting me as the candidate for the first kidney transplant in this country looked like a good beginning.

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We were told that one of my close relatives should donate the kidney. All my relatives including parents, brothers, sisters and wife went through tests to see if any of them were suitable kidney donors. Results accepted my father's kidney. After the transplant I opened my eyes in the sterile room, I was surprised to find the full urine bag by my bed-side. I sent a message outside informing relatives about my health and inquiring about the health of my father, whose kidney had started doing its vital job in my body.

For about three weeks I recovered in a sterile isolated room.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March, I was discharged from the hospital after seven months. It was a day which we all looked for. I was back with my family members. I was permitted to resume my normal official duties in August 1971.

Nearly two years have passed since my transplant. This period has brought me back as a normal man in all spheres of life. So much has been done by my doctors, relatives and friends; now the responsibility to maintain what has been achieved is mine. I must convey my thanks to the team of doctors, sisters, various departments of the hospital, my relatives and friends by whose efforts I am able to see this day; all those who must have prayed to Almighty God for my life. I pray to God that this hospital will always continue to offer this type of help to those in need"...

**Ever since then, The Departments of Urology and Nephrology has performed 3755 transplants and 188 deceased donor transplants. In 1992, the deceased donor transplant programme began followed by laparoscopic donor nephrectomies in 1999.**



A recent picture featuring Dr. K.V. Johny and Dr. Mohan Rao in a firm handshake. Along with Dr. Meshach G. Kirubakaran (R) and Dr. Chakko Korula Jacob (L).