



09 AUG, 2020

Woman donates kidney to save husband's life

Borneo Post (KK), Malaysia

Page 1 of 3

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By Mariah Doksil

WHEN Norhasnizah Hadinin from Pitas, and Muhamad Hizat Firdaus Kamarulzaman from Kuala Lumpur got married seven years ago, it seemed they were a perfect match.

It was only recently, that the couple learned just how true that really was.

Hizat, 33, was diagnosed with kidney failure in September 2018.

He was admitted in Pitas Hospital at first, but later transferred to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kota Kinabalu, where after two weeks of treatments, the specialist doctors recommended dialysis due to the high levels of creatinine in Hizat's laboratory results and said it was something to keep an eye on.

Norhasnizah was determined to save Hizat's life with her kidney.

"When I said to one of the doctors that I want to do a kidney transplant, I was told that in most cases, wives cannot do the transplant because their kidneys are small. I was disappointed at that time because I knew it was not going to be a smooth journey for us after that.

"When my husband was discharged, we went back to Pitas because we both work in a relative's prawn farm. Hizat was at home, not showing any improvement, his creatinine level kept increasing instead. The worst part was that he



Norhasnizah and Hizat, a day before the transplant surgery on July 27

didn't want to do dialysis," said Norhasnizah.

She did not have any option but to bring Hizat back to Kuala Lumpur, hoping he would agree to do dialysis there, where he could be near his parents.

She took four months' leave and finally managed to persuade her husband to continue treatment.

"After four months' leave, I went back to Pitas alone to continue working while my

husband stayed in Kuala Lumpur to continue his treatment.

"Alhamdulillah all the treatments were covered by insurance, but there were additional expenses that we had to look at. That is why I had to go home and continue working," she said.

Last year, Norhasnizah was determined to give her kidney after looking at her husband's condition.

When Hizat decided to come



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Page 2 of 3

back to Sabah in December last year, Norhasnizah said there were no dialysis centres available because all were fully booked.

In Pitas Hospital, the only dialysis centre in the district, it is always full.

Even Kota Belud and Tuaran Hospital are also full all the time.

They had to go to Kota Kinabalu.

"At first we went to KPJ Sabah Specialist Hospital, after that to B Braun Medical Centre and finally to MAA Medicare Charity Dialysis Centre in Kepyayan.

"We had to travel back and forth from Pitas to KK three times a week. The cost was high," she said.

After doing some research online, Norhasnizah found many success stories of wives donating their kidneys to their husbands, including in Malaysia, singer Dayangku Intan who donated her kidney to her husband.

"My husband did not agree at first, as he was worried my parents would not allow me to give my kidney.

"But my parents never discouraged me from becoming a donor, because my uncle did it (organ donation) before, and he lived until he was in his 80s, and died of asthma. Not because he only had one kidney," said Norhasnizah.

In Malaysia, she said only a few hospitals can perform kidney transplant such as Kuala Lumpur Hospital (HKL), UiTM Medical Specialist Centre Sungai Buloh,

University of Malaya Medical Centre (PPUM), Prince Court Medical Centre and Sunway Medical Centre.

"Since my husband was treated in Thomson Hospital Kota Damansara which is near to his parents' place, I asked his doctor how to donate my kidney.

"We were advised to set an appointment with Dr Iqbal in Sungai Buloh hospital to ask further about the procedures," she said.

Dr Iqbal, she said, explained about operation cost, and also all expenses that they need to pay, such as RM5,000 to RM6,000 screening costs, RM50,000 to RM60,000 operation cost and monthly followup for anti-rejection treatment which will cost them about RM2,500 monthly.

"All of our savings went to the screening cost, while the operation cost was from both families. We received RM1,000 critical illness cash aid from the Kudat Parliament office and also a personal contribution from Datuk Rosnah.

"We have submitted application letters for cash assistance from Pusat Zakat KL, Welfare Department, Pusat Zakat Sabah...but we haven't receive any answers as of today," she said when contacted by The Borneo Post.

After successful tests and screenings, the couple went through a successful kidney transplant surgery on July 28.

Norhasnizah, who is still in the ward said she hopes Hizat's health would improve after this.

"My husband was in the ICU for almost a week but now he has already been transferred to the patient ward.

"The process was very smooth for us, and hopefully our journey would inspire more people to consider becoming organ donors because so many people need it.

Norhasnizah and Hizat's story was shared on social media, where many are interested to know more about organ donation.

Organ donation is not new in Malaysia, as it is a treatment method that has been accepted in our country.

However, according to the Health Ministry, the number of patients who need organ transplants is increasing from year to year, but the number of pledgers who want to donate after death is low.

In 1999, the Organ Donor Card was launched as an indication of a person's registration as an organ donor. Until now, it is estimated that over 126,000 donors have been recorded in the National Transplant Resource Centre. This number is very low compared to the population of approximately 27 million people in this country.

Meanwhile in Sabah, Pusat Sumber Transplan Sabah is located at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and can be contacted at 088-517 555.



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Page 3 of 3

SUMMARIES

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