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HEALTH

Malatya is preparing to reach a milestone in cross-liver transplants.

Having performed the world's first six-liver cross-transplant and achieving its 96th multiple transplant, the Malatya İnönü University Liver Transplant Institute is preparing to celebrate its 100th milestone.

Yeter Erdine

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Malatya

The Liver Transplant Institute, which performed the world's first 6-donor cross-liver transplant using a donor matching technique developed by Turkish scientists Prof. Dr. Tayfun Sönmez and Prof. Dr. Utku Ünver at Boston College in the USA, has performed a second 6-donor cross-liver transplant.

The Institute Director, Prof. Dr. Sezai Yılmaz, who was awarded the "Ibn Sina Service Awards" in the "Surgical Medical Sciences" category on March 14th, Medical Day, for his work which offers great hope for patients with incompatible living donors, received his award from President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at a ceremony held at the Istanbul Haliç Congress Center.

Cross-transplants, which began with kidney transplants in America in 1986, were adapted to liver transplants in 2010, resulting in double cross-liver transplants. Cross-liver transplants also started to be performed at İnönü University Turgut Özal Medical Center in 2022.

In Malatya, which was affected by the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes, the world's third triple cross-liver transplant was performed in April 2023, and despite the earthquakes, cross-liver transplants increased last year.

Professor Dr. Sezai Yılmaz told an AA reporter that cross-liver transplants offer great hope for patients with incompatible living donors.

Yılmaz stated that cross-liver transplants are an extremely important innovation and development, especially in living donor liver transplants.

Professor Dr. Yılmaz stated that as an institute they have performed double, triple, quadruple, and quintuple cross-liver transplants, and that they performed the world's first 6-part cross-liver transplant on January 23rd and the second 6-part cross-liver transplant on March 11th, adding that these are difficult and large-scale operations in terms of organization, planning, surgeries, intensive care process, and pre-operative preparations.

Professor Dr. Yılmaz stated that İnönü University is the only institution in the world to have achieved this, and continued as follows:

"Six-way cross liver transplants mean 100 personnel, nearly 50 surgeons, intensive care doctors, anesthesiologists, numerous infectious disease doctors, and therefore 12 operating rooms and equipment. So,

from any perspective, it's a very large organization, and this organization is successfully carried out at the İnönü University Liver Transplant Institute, offering great hope for patients and donors who have incompatibility problems with living donors, a rate that is 60-70% in living donors."



Photo: Yeter Erdine/AA

96 cross-transplants were performed at the center.

Stating that they had no intention of breaking records or putting on a show, Yılmaz continued his remarks as follows:

"We would prefer to perform as many transplants as possible, for example, instead of one 6-donor cross-transplant, we would like to do two 3-donor transplants on separate days, so the team gets less tired and everything is easier. However, these 6-donor cross-transplants are necessary models for patients who have no other option, so we are forced to perform these 6-donor, or 5-donor, transplants."

To date, 102 multiple liver transplants have been performed worldwide. 96 of these 102 were performed in Malatya. This is a very significant event. Malatya İnönü University Liver Transplant Institute is truly the undisputed capital of cross-liver transplantation. We have performed 96 cross-liver transplants so far. I believe we will reach 100 soon, and after reaching 100, the lessons learned from cross-liver transplantation will be showcased, and I think Malatya will set a roadmap for the world, sending a message to the whole world in a scientific sense."

He received the award from President Erdoğan.

Yılmaz, who received the Ibn Sina Service Award in the Surgical Sciences category for his groundbreaking cross-transplants that resonated worldwide, and who received his award from President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on March 14, said, "Receiving such an award from our President is a great honor and source of pride for the university, my city, the Liver Transplant Institute, and myself. I thank him very much and offer my respects."

Yılmaz stated that, as a native of Malatya, he was delighted to bring an award from President Erdoğan to the city, and that this was the result of joint, collaborative, and successful work by the university, faculty, and department.