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KOLKATA: In perhaps the first instance of Covid survivors participating in an organ transplant surgery in India, a 65-year-old mother donated one of her kidneys to her 38-year-old son at a city hospital last week, days after both recovered from an attack of the novel coronavirus.

The mother-son duo from Bangladesh successfully underwent the transplant that saved the life of the son who had been suffering from end-stage renal failure.

Uttam Kumar Ghosh had arrived in Kolkata along with his parents, wife and daughter in end-January. But by the time doctors at RN Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences (RTTICS) could schedule a surgery after getting all necessary permission from the state health department, the lockdown had been imposed. Then came an advisory from the Union health ministry that advocated transplant surgeries only in emergency cases in view of the ongoing Covid scenario.

“We decided to conduct the surgery once we got more clarity on how to go about it. According to an SOP, both donor and recipient had to be tested for Covid. Unfortunately, both mother and son tested positive,” said nephrologist Deepak Shankar Ray, head of the nephrology department at RTIICS.

Ray said: “Since the family had financial constraints, we decided to send both of them to the state-run MR Bangur Hospital for

Covid treatment. It helped that the hospital has good dialysis facility, which the recipient needed while being treated for Covid.”

The duo was released from M R Bangur on June 12 after they tested negative. But the doctors had to wait for another two weeks due to the mandatory home quarantine period. The transplant surgery was finally conducted on July 3.

“Covid infection can prove very nasty for renal-failure patients but luckily, this patient had very mild infection,” said Ray, who conducted the surgery.

Both the donor and recipient are recuperating well. While the mother will be discharged in a couple of days, the son will have to be in hospital care for few more days.

“We were looked after very well at M R Bangur. None one made us feel like outsiders. They did not let us lose hope even once,” said Uttam, a private firm employee from Siraz Ganj in Bangladesh.

Mother Kalpana said she was initially worried when she tested positive for Covid. “But I told myself that I had to come out of this infection because my only son needed me to infuse life into him.”

The family had earlier visited a few hospitals in south India but were told that they did not accept donors above 60 years. At RTIICS, Ray and his team found that the mother’s kidney function was good enough for a transplant. The unit accepts donors till the age of 69 if the organ is fit.