AIMS conducts first pancreas kidney transplant in Kerala

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Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi, Kerala has recently conducted the first combined pancreas kidney transplant of the state. It was the third successful transplant in the country.

The complex surgery was carried out in a 35 year old type 1 diabetic patient, Syed Yunus Shahir, from Palakkad who had developed complications such as retinopathy, diabetic nephropathy and end stage kidney failure, over the past two years.

The surgery normalised his blood sugar levels and diabetes as been cured without the need for insulin administration followed by the proper functioning of the kidneys.

This combined procedure of transplanting both the Kidney & Pancreas in a single surgical operation is particularly effective for patients who have Type 1 Diabetes and chronic kidney failure. If the kidney alone is transplanted and the Diabetes is poorly controlled, then even the transplanted kidney will slowly be affected by the high blood sugar levels.

The advantage of this combined transplantation is improvement in quality of life and freedom from diabetes related complications and dialysis. This also avoids frequent blood sugar testing and occurrence of life threatening low blood sugars as a result of insulin overdose.

Simultaneous kidney-pancreas transplants aren't new in medical literature. The first transplant was done in 1966 in the US and hundreds of transplants have been done since then in Western and Far East centres. However, this is a rare surgery in India probably due to scarcity of donor organs.

This technically complex surgery was done by a multi-disciplinary team involving Transplant Surgery, Nephrology, Urology, Endocrinology and Anaesthesia and Critical care. Solid organ transplant unit of AIMS has been active in the field of both live and deceased donor liver transplantation. So far, more than 350 liver transplants have been performed at AIMS since 2004, including India’s first paediatric liver transplant.

The organ donation was facilitated by the Kerala Network for Organ Sharing (KNOS) the Kerala Government’s Nodal Agency for Organ Retrieval and Sharing.