

Brazil Has World's Largest Public Transplant System

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In the last two years, Brazil presented record growth in the number of organ transplants and has become the country with the largest number of this kind of procedure executed by public systems in the world.

Figures show that there was a 37% increase between 2002 and 2004, when Brazil reached the figure of 10,920 transplants. In 2002, a total of 7,981 procedures took place.

Between January and March this year, preliminary figures show that a total of 2,500 transplants took place throughout the country.

The kind of transplant that grew most was that of corneas, with an increase of 52.6% - from 3,496, in 2002, to 5,335, in 2004.

The number of donations also rose - from 1,183 in 2003 to 1,408 in 2004 - as did the total of procedures in practically all states.

Twenty-one states and the Federal District, where Brazilian capital Brasília is located, currently have transplant centers. The units in the states of Acre, Rondônia and Tocantins, all in the north of the country, are currently in the phase of implementation.

The Ministry of Health relates this increase to greater public awareness and to the participation of the society in the donation and transplant process, and also mentions campaigns providing incentives to donations.

The public health network counts on 1,260 medical teams and 551 units registered for transplants. In 2004, approximately US\$ 167.1 million were turned to organ and tissue transplants.

This value is 16.61% greater than the US\$ 143.3 million invested in the previous year. Currently, a transplant costs, on average, US\$ 14,600 to the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS).

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