

1 patient's account of becoming a live kidney donor

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Annabel Ferriman, an editor at the *BMJ*, gives a frank first person account of her journey through the "protracted" and sometimes "frustrating" process of becoming a live kidney donor to her friend, Ray, who had been suffering from polycystic kidney disease for eight years.

Although overall a positive experience, she describes how 16 months of tests, some of which had to be repeated after her notes went missing, and some unnecessary delays, at times left her "seething with rage".

In one instance, she describes how after turning up for the results of tests on a liver lesion, she waited for 90 minutes only to be told that they were still unsure about the nature of the lesion and that she would have to return a week later.

Thankfully the lesion was benign and during the final stages progress was swift, she recalls. The operation was performed laparoscopically and her recovery was fast and she has had no adverse effects. Ray took a little longer to recuperate, but is doing well and is also back at work.

Because of the shortage of cadaver organs and the higher success rates with living organ transplants, the Royal Free Hospital, where she had the operation, is keen to expand its programme. But, she says, her experience has left her "wondering if it has the capacity to do so."

"I am recounting the tale partly to encourage other people to consider kidney donation, but also in the hope that hospitals might make the path

for donors a little easier", she concludes.

"Annabel's helpful account describes a process that we recognise [in this instance] was extended", says Dr Bimbi Fernando, one of Annabel's transplant surgeons from the Royal Free Hospital, in an accompanying article. This was due in part to the difficulties of managing her unexpected liver abnormality, but it was compounded by some administrative delays.

Over the past 12 months, he explains, the trust has made substantial changes and investment in the transplant process, and the average time it takes from the beginning of donor testing to the transplant operation has fallen from 200 days to 116 days.

Source: BMJ

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