Spain transplants hit record despite crisis

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Surgeons in Spain transplanted a record number of organs in 2013, the government said Monday, keeping the country world leader in the field despite heavy health spending cuts.

Transplants of all kinds increased in Spain, particularly lung replacements, up nearly 20 percent, and pancreas transplants, up more than 10 percent, the [health ministry](#) said.

A record total of 4,279 transplants were carried out in Spain in 2013, of which 2,552 were of kidneys, 1,093 of livers and 285 of lungs, it said.

"The Spanish transplant system, which has been the world leader for 22 years, has again demonstrated its vitality," said the head of the state National Transplant Organisation, Rafael Matesanz.

"Its activity increased in 2013 in very difficult circumstances," he told a news conference, presenting a transplants report.

Spain's government in 2012 cut the annual national [health](#) budget by seven billion euros ($9.6 billion) a year in its efforts to strengthen public finances, causing waiting lists for non-urgent surgery to lengthen.

But the national transplant system has thrived over the years, with the number of donors increasing from 14 per million people in 1989 to 35 per million in 2011, Matesanz said.

That put Spain far ahead of other countries, with 26 donors per million

people in the United States, 25 in France and just under 15 in Germany, according to the transplant body's latest figures from 2011.

Spain is also considered a pioneer in certain complex operations, having carried out some of the first double transplants of arms and legs.

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