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Liver from Chennai Saves Man in Kovai; 108 Ambulance Gives Speedy Support

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The team of doctors coming out of Coimbatore International airport with the harvested liver (in box), on Sunday

COIMBATORE/CHENNAI : A team of doctors from a Coimbatore hospital performed a liver transplant surgery after airlifting the harvested organs of an accident victim from Chennai, on Sunday.

The procedure was performed at the Kovai Medical Centre and Hospital (KMCH) after its team of specialists went to Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) and harvested the liver of a 27-year-old brain-dead man.

The harvesting was done by a team of doctors led by Dr Magnus J Mansard, liver surgeon of KMCH. Six organs of Christo Suganth, who died in a road accident on Friday, were harvested. As the TN Cadaver Transplant Registry allocates organs to various hospitals for patients on the waiting list, the KMCH received the liver.

The GH used the 108 ambulance service to hurry the liver to the Chennai airport for onward transport to Coimbatore. “We got a call from the GH asking if we could provide a vehicle for transport. Though we had never done an organ transport before, we did it because it was done to save a life,” said an official with GVK-EMRI, which jointly runs 108 in the State.

With speed and dexterity part of their inbuilt skill set, the 108 pilot did the 22 km journey from the RGGGH to the Chennai Airport in Meenambakkam in 19 minutes. “They left with the organ but did not overspeed as there are plenty of speed-breakers along the way. Traffic was also low as it was a Sunday,” said the official.

At the airport, the doctors who did the harvest waited for a bit and then boarded Jet Airways flight 9W 2765 that left at 2.40 pm, and arrived in Coimbatore an hour later. Sources at GH said they had opted to call in 108 to transport the organ as their own drivers were engaged and speed was of the essence in this case - livers show best results when transplanted within 2-5 hours of the harvest from the donor..

A team of surgeons led by hepatologist Dr Olith Selvan successfully transplanted the harvested liver on a patient.