

10 million yen buys patient new kidney in Philippines

MANILA (Kyodo) Denying involvement in the illegal organ trade, a Japanese man revealed in a recent interview that he paid around 10 million yen to a Japanese agent to undergo a kidney transplant in the Philippines.

Of the 10 million yen, or \$ 82,000, \$ 20,000 went to the agent, \$ 40,000 to doctors and the hospital at which the surgery was conducted, and \$ 21,000 to a group that recruits donors, said the 44-year-old self-employed man from Osaka Prefecture. No parties involved in the transplant were identified.

A donor receives around 980,000 yen from the group, the man said after his transplant, which came amid controversy in the Philippines over organ trade by poor people.

But the man claimed he did not believe he took part in organ trade. "I think I paid the money to a group supporting donors, and I don't consider it as organ trade," he said.

"I initially hoped to get a transplant in Japan, but I was told that I would have to wait 15 to 20 years, and I decided to receive a transplant overseas," he said.

At first he tried to receive a kidney in China, but gave up because of tightened rules.

The man went to the Philippines in late June and underwent the surgery in the suburbs of Manila earlier this month, receiving a kidney donated by a 24-year-old man.

"This business is necessary for patients," said the Japanese agent who arranged the transplant for the Osaka man. "We are involved in translation and travel arrangements for patients and we do not help them to find donors," the agent said, denying any illegality.

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