



EL FORO DE LA NATIONAL KIDNEY RESEARCH FUND: «ORGAN DONATION: THE WAY FORWARD»

Introduction and welcome

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Welcome to the Royal College of Physicians of London and to this meeting on Organ Donation for Transplantation organised by *The National Kidney Research Fund*.

The National Kidney Research Fund is one of 18 organisations that make up the Transplant Partnership and many of our partners are represented in the audience and in the Panel who will be introduced to you later this morning by our Vice President, Professor Andrew Rees. As a research charity we see our main role in the Partnership as assembling the facts, identifying research that needs to be done, facilitating that research and encouraging Parliament to act on the results. The pre-circulated paper by Professor Stewart Cameron summarises our work to date and ends with a wish list of research projects, some of which are already underway.

One theme recurring in the literature is the contrast between Britain and Spain. While the British rate of organ donation has remained static over the last 10 years, and even fallen a little in the last few, in Spain it has risen progressively to twice the British level. There has been much speculation as to why it can be done in Spain but not in Britain and as we learn about the Spanish system, it appears that it can be done in Britain if we are prepared to make changes and if the Government gives us the resources. However, it will not happen overnight. It took 10 years in Spain and it will probably take 10 years here, but it would be nice to be on a rising curve again.

Our first speaker this morning is Raphael Mate-sanz. He has had a brilliant career in his native Madrid, winning many prizes and holding posts in all the prestigious centres and is now a Nephrologist in the Ramon y Cajal Hospital in Madrid. In 1989 he founded the Spanish National Transplant Organisation and was its Director until 1996. He is universally regarded as the architect of the Spanish system and has successfully exported it to parts of Italy and Australia. Raphael has been President of both the Spanish National Journals for Nephrology and Transplant and Chairman of the Transplant Expert Com-

mittee of the Council of Europe, and has directed the Spanish National Institute of Health (INSALUD). He has published more than 400 articles, mainly in Nephrology and Transplant and more than 100 books and book chapters and for the last 15 years he has edited *Nefrologia*, the Spanish Journal of Nephrology as well as several other journals.

Our second speaker this morning, and Chairman for the first session, is Mr John Forsythe, Consultant Transplant Surgeon and Director of the Transplant Unit at the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh. He qualified in Newcastle upon Tyne and was Transplant Surgeon there before he moved to Edinburgh. He is General Secretary of the British Transplant Society and a member of four other advisory bodies on transplant and renal medicine and an advisor to NKRF on transplantation issues. He will be presenting a paper originally prepared by Professor Stewart Cameron, an NKRF Trustee. The reason that Stewart isn't here is because he was actually thought to be going under the surgeon's knife, and I very pleased to say that I see him in the audience. I think he has managed to get back at the surgeon for not being able to operate by asking a surgeon to present the paper for him.

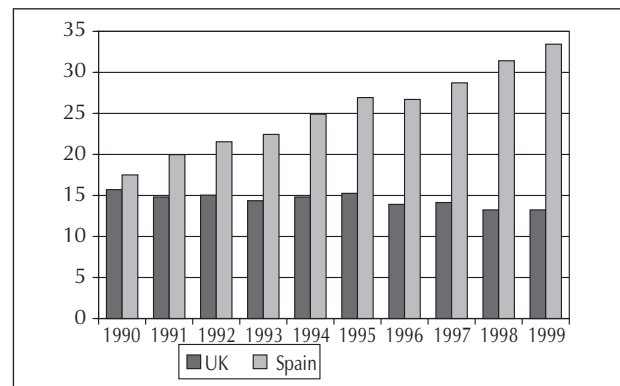


Fig. 1.—Trends in organ donation during the nineties.