

Heart & Lung III - Lung

The journey to lung transplantation in the Philippines

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In the 1990s. The Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP), the only tertiary government hospital for pulmonary diseases and thoracic surgery in the country sent thoracic surgeons, pulmonologists and anesthesiologists to selected lung transplantation centers like the Toronto General Hospital, Stanford University Hospital and Papworth Hospital. Its surgical team performed lung transplantation in dogs. But a fire in 1998 razed the hospital which took a few years to completely rebuild. The priority then was to reestablish the disrupted pulmonary medicine and thoracic surgery training programs. When I became director of the LCP in 2011, I slowly tried to establish a lung transplant program, aside from VATS, interventional pulmonology and other programs. I was able to get 3 ECMO machines and was able to send doctors and nurses for ECMO training at the National Taiwan University Hospital. I also initiated a joint lung transplant program with the neighboring National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi) which has performed more than 6,000 kidney transplants and also liver transplants. With the support of the present heads of both the LCP and NKTi, there are ongoing live simulations of donor heart and lung procurement together with the liver and kidney teams. The aim is to perform the country's first lung transplantation with the ultimate goal of building a sustainable and long-term viable lung transplantation program in the Philippines.