



Tissue Donation – Building a bridge for life

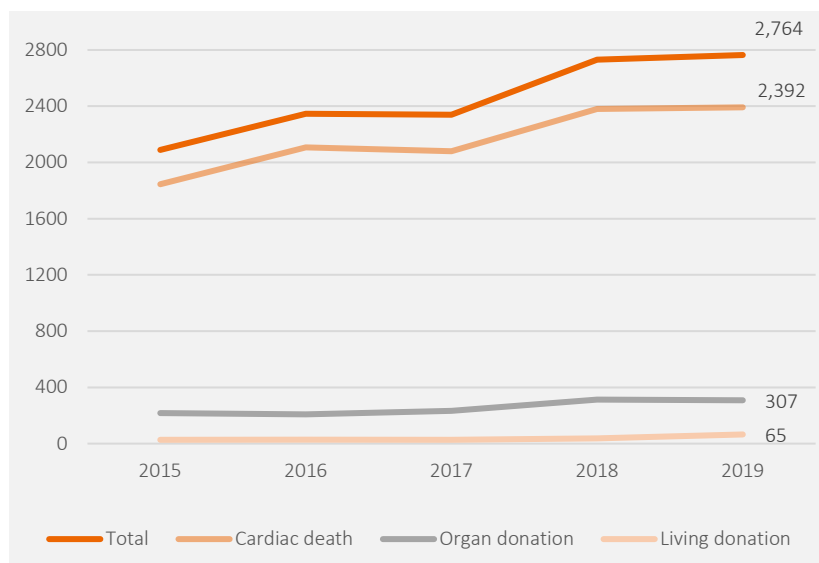
Find out more about the DGFG network!

Dear partners and interested parties,

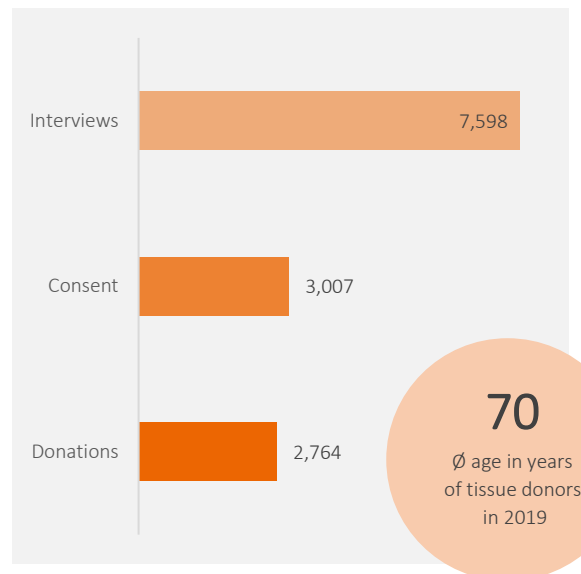
more than 3,000 donors or their relatives have said "yes" to tissue donation in 2019. More than 5,800 transplants have been given to patients throughout Germany, helping them on their way back to vision, mobility and health. This short report gives an overview of the most important developments in tissue donation, processing and transplantation in the DGFG network. This year, the annual report is fully available in digital form (in German only).

Martin Börgel, Managing Director

Number of tissue donors 2015-2019



Next-of-kin interviews vs. consent & donations in 2019

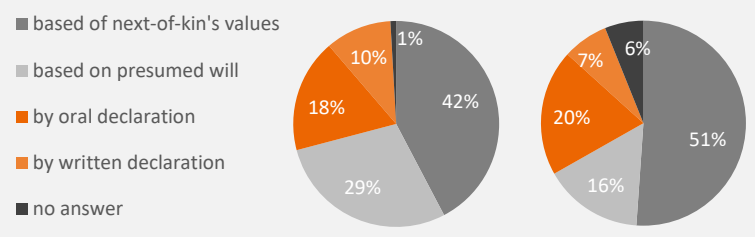


In 2019, a total of 2,764 people in the DGFG network donated tissue. This corresponds to an increase of 1.2 percent compared to the previous year. 86.5 percent were donors after cardiac death. Although the number of living donors (placenta and heart valves) has increased significantly from 38 in 2018 to 65 in 2019, it still remains relatively low. The number of brain-dead donors from organ donation – which rose significantly from 233 donors in 2017 to 313 donors in 2018 – stagnated last year.

In 2019, the coordinators of the DGFG processed almost 40,000 reports on patients who died in cooperation clinics.

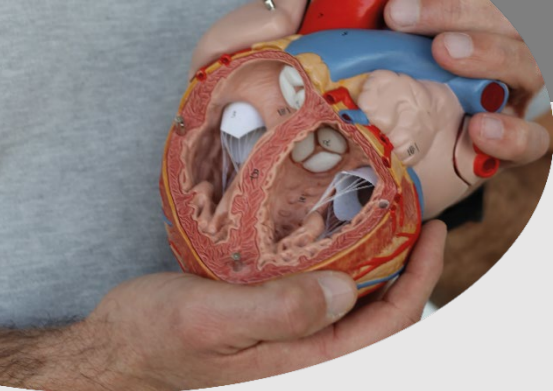
A total of 7,598 interviews were held with relatives and living donors about tissue donation. 3,007 times a donation was agreed to; in 2,764 of these cases the donation was realised.

Decision basis: Consent (left) vs. denial (right)



Not even one third of the decisions for or against tissue donation are made on the basis of the will of the deceased, which is explicitly expressed orally or even documented in writing.

These figures make it very clear that the will of the deceased is often not known to the relatives. Talking about one's own will with the family or carrying a donation card can provide security and relieve to relatives.



New donation program for heart valves and blood vessels

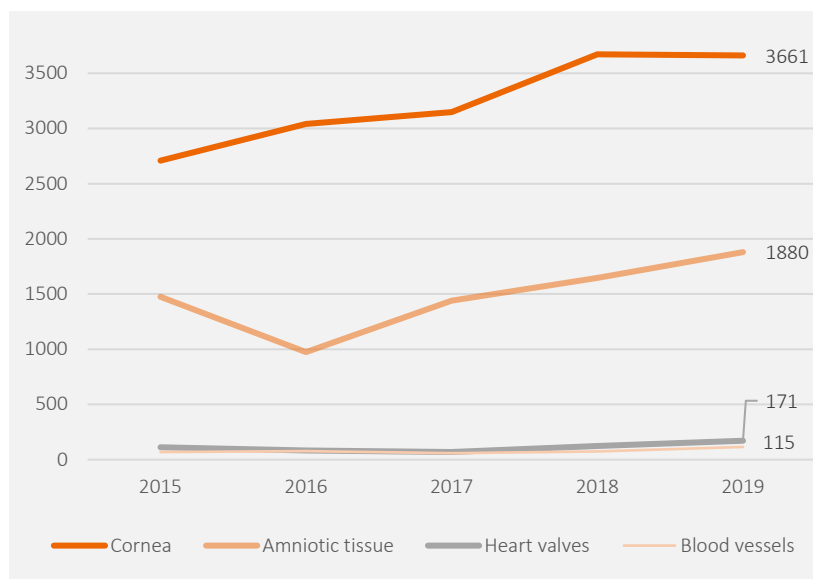
There are only estimates of the need for tissue transplants or the actual number of transplants. But one thing is certain: in cardiovascular tissues, there is a serious mismatch between need and availability. A need of about 500 homografts of heart valves and 500 blood vessels per year can be assumed.

Heart valves and blood vessels originate largely from organ donations. Since those have stagnated at a low level for years, the donation of cardiovascular tissue is also limited. The DGFG is therefore intensifying programmes for the donation of heart valves and blood vessels after cardiac death. While ten such donations could be realized in 2018, in 2019 already 31 people donated cardiovascular tissue after cardiac death.



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cornea	4,020	4,512	4,507	5,249	5,234
Musculoskeletal tissue	22	0	0	0	0
Heart valves	144	148	196	313	378
Blood vessels	138	142	177	195	206
Placenta	17	21	15	29	40
Total	4,341	4,823	4,895	5,786	5,858

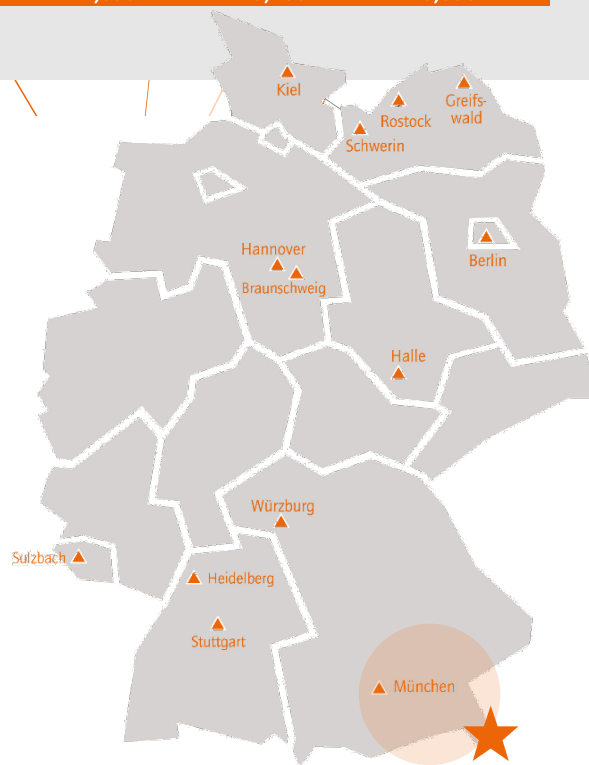
Tissue transplants provided by DGFG 2015-2019



The total number of tissue transplants delivered by the DGFG increased in 2019 as in previous years.

In particular, more amniotic and cardiovascular tissue transplants were allocated. As in 2018, the growth rate of provided amniotic tissue transplants is 14 percent. The number of heart valves allocated increased by 30 percent; blood vessels were provided one and a half times as many as in 2018.

Furthermore, about half of the corneal transplants provided by German corneal banks originate from the DGFG network. In 2019, the DGFG provided a total of 5,827 tissue transplants for patients. Of 3,661 corneal transplants allocated, 381 were LaMEK – lamellar grafts prepared in the tissue bank for DMEK.



Tissue banking within the DGFG network

In 2019, the DGFG in Munich welcomed both a new donor site and the 13th tissue bank in the DGFG network: the Bavarian Tissue Bank (section corneal bank).

In total, the tissue banks in the DGFG network registered 5,858 tissue donations. The transplantation rate in the cornea banks in the network was 71.1 percent in 2019.

Find out more about tissue medicine in Germany!

