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LOSING FAITH IN THE DEAD DONOR RULE



Dr Kartina Aisha Choong

The David Price Memorial Seminar Series
De Montfort University, 16 December 2013

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Outline

- **Organ Donation: A Religious Perspective**
- **Dead Donor Rule & Faith Communities**
- **Recommendations**

ORGAN DONATION



A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

Christianity

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”

The New Testament (John 15:13)

Islam

“Whosoever saves a life, it shall be as if he has given life to all mankind”

The Quran (Surah Al-Mai'dah, verse 32)

Judaism

“to sustain a single human soul is
equivalent to sustaining an entire world”

The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 4:5)

THE DEAD DONOR RULE & FAITH COMMUNITIES



The Dead Donor Rule (DDR)

- Organ retrieval must not kill the donor
- Donor must be declared dead first

Rationale

1) To protect vulnerable groups





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2) To prevent premature declaration of death



3) Doctors are healers, not killers



4) To maintain public confidence

“the ethical linchpin of a voluntary system of organ donation”

- John Robertson

Dr Juro Wada

(1922 - 2011)

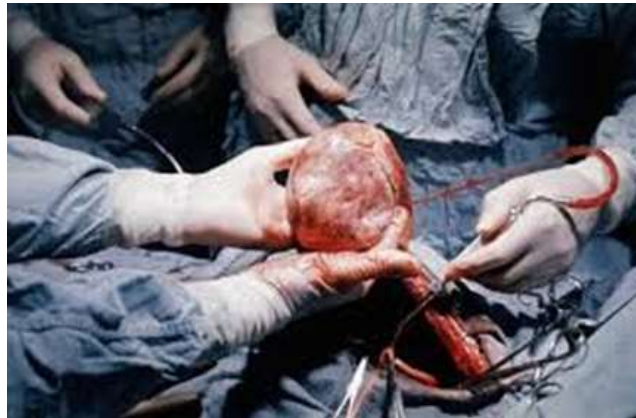


Current Definition of Death

Brain stem death



Dead person, living body



Soulless death

Death in Abrahamic Faith Traditions

- When the soul is separated from the body



- When breathing and heartbeat have stopped

Living person(!), living body

The DDR Revisited

- But organ retrieval must not kill the donor
- Donor must be declared dead first

“dead enough”

Jay Baruch (2003)

“being dead for the purposes of”

John Tuohey (2009)

“Heartbeat and blood pressure rise as the surgeon cuts into the supposedly dead organ donor, a similar reaction to a healthy person being attacked with a knife”

Dr David Wainwright Evans (Cardiologist, Queens College Cambridge)

“Postmortem examinations are carried out on dead bodies; **organs are harvested from living ones.** [The latter are] responsive to pain, requiring paralysing drugs, blood transfusion and anaesthetics for surgery”

Dr David J Hill (Consultant Anaesthetist, Huntingdon)

“No respectable, learned, and accepted Catholic moral theologian has said that the words of Jesus regarding the laying down of one’s life for one’s friend (John 15:13) is a command or even a license for suicidal consent for the benefit of another’s continuation of earthly life.”



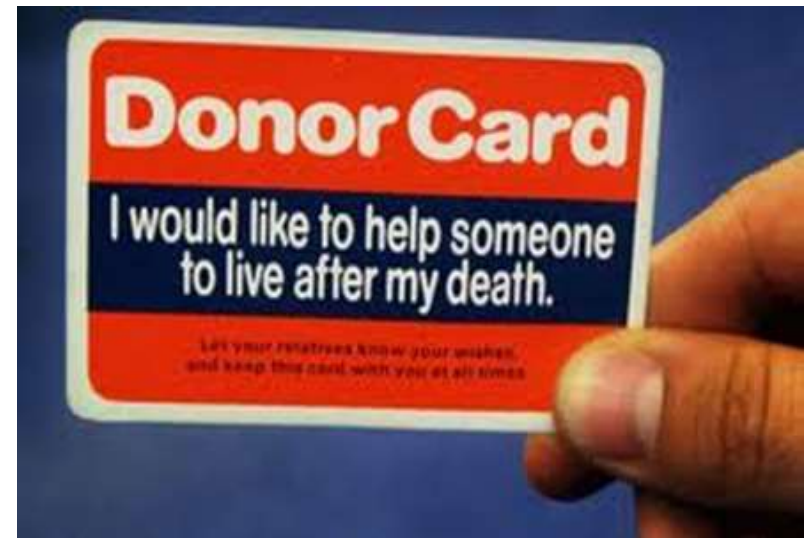
Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Honesty

- in public campaigns; &
- when obtaining consent

Current campaigns





“The current discourse between organ
procurement organisations and the
public is **tainted with self-interest**”

Frank Chaten (2013)



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2) Legal recognition for other definitions of death

The Gift “of Life”



Thank you for your attention

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