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LOSING FAITH IN THE DEAD DONOR RULE

Dr Kartina Aisha Choong
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’dhah, 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
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 Gift of Life

Donor Card
I would like to help someone to live after my death.

Let your relatives know your wishes, and keep this card with you at all times.

INNOVATIVE THINKING
FOR THE REAL WORLD
“The current discourse between organ procurement organisations and the public is tainted with self-interest”

Frank Chaten (2013)
OPT IN

OPT OUT
2) Legal recognition for other definitions of death
The Gift “of Life”
Thank you for your attention

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