

Editorial

Body Donation: A Noble Deed for a Noble Cause

Body donation is defined as the act of giving one's body after death for medical research, education, and hands-on training. Cadaveric dissection is the only tool which aids the medical students to understand human anatomy and consequently utilize this knowledge for their clinical subjects. In most of these fields, the study of anatomy comes first in the curriculum and serves as the foundation for other courses. Further, physicians in residency training and those in practice often pursue special courses in anatomy. In addition to being used for teaching medical and other health profession students, bodies that are donated to medical schools are also used by research physicians in the development of new surgical procedures, such as for developing new arthroscopic surgeries, knee, ankle and shoulder joint research, plastic surgery procedures including flap reconstruction for burn victims, surgical approaches to various internal organs, and many other surgical and medical procedures. Books and computer programs cannot replicate the hands-on method of teaching anatomy. At the rate at which medical science is advancing, it is increasingly necessary for physicians and other biomedical scientists to conduct special anatomical studies and research. As you consider the option of donating your body to science, know that the need is great and that your gift will be valued and honoured. Your donation will play a critical role in helping medical students to master the complex anatomy of the human body and will provide researchers with the essential tools to help our patients of tomorrow.

Many factors, such as age, religion, culture, personality characteristics, views on death, and mortality and humanitarian concerns influence a person's opinion toward body donation. Majority of the religions approve body and organ donation as a charitable act of giving for medical teaching and transplants. There is no upper age limit for whole body donation. Medical conditions that would prevent acceptance as a donor include: Hepatitis, HIV, and tuberculosis. Extensive trauma at the time of death or advanced decomposition would also make the remains unsuitable for anatomical study.

Whole body donation is the last act of generosity and acknowledging the importance of whole body donation to the careers of aspiring physicians. Donation is a gift to future generations that inspires and informs physicians and gives them access to the highest form of training.

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