



Australian Government

National Health and
Medical Research Council

N H M R C

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BACKGROUND

DRAFT National Protocol for Donation after Cardiac Death

About organ and tissue donation and transplantation

Organ and tissue donation and transplantation is accepted as an effective and well-established intervention that can save lives or significantly improve quality of life. The retrieval of organs and tissues from donors requires careful ethical, legal and clinical considerations to ensure that the interests of the potential donor are always foremost and that no harm is done to this person, their family, the potential organ recipients or the health care team.

What is donation after cardiac death?

Donation after Cardiac Death, also known as non-heart beating donation, is the donation of organs and tissue following certification of death using the criterion of irreversible cessation of circulation of blood in the body.

About the Donation after Cardiac Death Draft Protocol

What is the purpose of a National Protocol for Donation after Cardiac Death?

In July 2008, the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC) agreed that a nationally consistent protocol and implementation plan be developed to consider ethical, legal and medical issues in the practice of Donation after Cardiac Death.

Who is developing the Donation after Cardiac Death protocol?

The Donation after Cardiac Death Protocol has been developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS) on behalf of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority (AOTDTA).

About the National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS):

NICS is an institute of the National Health and Medical Research Council that works to improve health care by helping close important gaps between best available evidence (what we know) and current clinical practice (what we do).

About the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority (AOTDTA)

The Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority was established on 1 January 2009 as an Australian Government statutory authority within the Health and Ageing portfolio. The role of the AOTDTA is to establish a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

Who is the Donation after Cardiac Death protocol for?

The Donation after Cardiac Death protocol is intended for use by clinicians and health care professionals involved in hospital-based organ and tissue donation processes.

How has the protocol been developed?

This protocol is based on a review of international and national experience relating to Donation after Cardiac Death, recommendations from a consensus stakeholder workshop held in March 2009 and recommendations in the following Australian documents:

- NHMRC Organ and Tissue Donation after Death, for Transplantation
- Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society – Statement on Death and Organ Donation
- NSW Health – Organ Donation after Cardiac Death: NSW Guideline

These recommendations were considered by a Donation after Cardiac Death Working Party, Chaired by Dr Gerry O’Callaghan (National Medical Director – AOTDTA), which is comprised of a consumer; an expert in law; an expert in ethics; professional representation from the organ and tissue donation and transplantation fields and acute care sectors.

What is in the protocol?

It is a step by step statement of the procedures and process when considering a patient for potential organ and tissue donation following the decision to withdraw cardio-respiratory support.

Who has funded the protocol?

The development of this protocol was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) initially and subsequently by the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority (AOTDTA).

About the consultation process

What is the purpose of the consultation?

The NHMRC and AOTDTA wish to ensure that the Australian community has an opportunity to comment on this protocol and seeks feedback on the content, accuracy and readability of the draft protocol.

How can I provide feedback?

A feedback form will be available for download on both the NHMRC and NICS websites. There is a four week public consultation period for the draft protocol ending 24 July 2009. Any member of the Australian public is welcome to comment. *Please note the public consultation period has been extended to 24 August 2009.*

All comments will be publicly available, reviewed and responded to before the final protocol is released. Where appropriate, changes will be incorporated in the protocol.

How can I access the draft National Protocol for Donation after Cardiac Death?

A PDF version of the draft protocol is available for public consultation at:

NHMRC website: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/consult/index/htm>

When will the final version be released and how can I access it?

The protocol will be released in October 2009 and will be available from the AOTDTA website at www.donatelife.gov.au. The final protocol will be widely disseminated amongst the organ and tissue donation and transplantation sectors.