



ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL TISSUE DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION

Marisa R Herson*

Associate Professor, Department of Health Ethics and Professionalism, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Published: 26th August 2018
*Corresponding author:
Marisa R Herson
Email:
herson.marisa@gmail.com

KEYWORDS

Tissue donation
Tissue transplantation
Ethics

SUMMARY

Human tissue donation, here to include eye, skin, musculoskeletal and cardiac tissues, is thought as an altruistic gesture from generous individuals in the hope to equally benefit all those in need of a life-saving or life changing transplant; the community of donors, their families, end users and recipients expect society to uphold to these values. To this intent, the World Health Organization member states have endorsed the Guiding Principles in Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation, intended to provide an ethical framework for the acquisition and transplantation of human cells, tissues and organs for therapeutic purposes. The 10 Principles define responsibilities in the procurement, distribution and use of medical products of human origin (MPHOs); request assurance that there be equity in donation so that needs are met; that MPHOs be used in a considerate manner; that donation be informed and voluntary when any compensation should guard against exploitation of vulnerable individuals and promote equity in donation; that donors be protected against physical and psychosocial risks; that privacy of donors and recipients be protected; that there be equity of access to MPHOs, promoted by sustained efforts to remove barriers to access; and that vigilance and surveillance programs be implemented to safeguard transparency in all related activities. This presentation will acknowledge that while important progress has been achieved in the adoption of the WHO Principles within global organ donation and transplantation, significant and specific challenges still remain in the human tissue arena, compounded by insufficient global data on demand and use, restricted resources, and frail policies in tissue donation, banking and clinical use. The presentation will also delve on the perceived tendency towards commodification of donated human grafts and the introduction of commercial practices that have the potential to defy altruistic tissue donation and transplantation, and interfere with equitable access to its benefits.