



BODY DONATION AND ITS ETHICS

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ABSTRACT

Body donation is an entire body donation for medical research and education after death. In ancient India, human bodies were dissected by Acharya Sushruta by using Ayurvedic methods for dissection. The first medical student to dissect a human corpse was Andreas Vesalius. The collection of dead bodies for teaching purposes is availed according to Anatomy Act 1948. Any person can donate the body and any state-approved hospital / medical institution can accept the body for medical education and research. Donor, while living can fill out the form of willingness for body donation. Depending on certain criteria, the donated body can also be rejected by institution as if amputation had occurred in the body or the body is involved in any medico-legal case. Some factors such as body ownership love or religious beliefs also prevent donation of the body. Awareness campaigns, paper and electronic media can improve the situation of fewer body donations.

KEYWORDS: Body donation, dissection, donate, human cadaver.

INTRODUCTION

Body donation is an entire body donation for medical research and education after death. It is useful for the understanding and advancement of the human body. Voluntary body donation is a program in which the general population will be able to provide their bodies for the purpose of medical education and scientific studies. Therefore, the entire body donation is the ours need.

Medical colleges are teaching anatomy using all the embalmed bodies. Anatomy is the study of human body structures and is one of the fundamental and important subjects that medical students need to study. Many assisted models have developed in the form of mannequins and simulation with improvement in technology, but none of these can be a substitute for a real cadaver. Each cadaver is like a new source of knowledge, as it is possible to identify many variations that might help the clinicians. These donations help the surgeons to experiment with innovative surgical skills, enabling them to explore them in a realistic way.^[1] With the increasing number of medical schools and the scarcity of corpses, Voluntary Body Donation is definitely a saviour and a ray of hope for medical science to improve.

History

Body Donation's first instance was that of Rishi *Dadhichi*, according to Indian mythology. For the preparation of auspicious weapons from his bones, he gave his living body (during his lifetime) to *Devraj Indra*. The enemy *Daiitya Vritasur* was defeated by these pious weapons. Body donation history can be traced back in ancient India, *Sushruta* dissected human body in about 500 BC. In Europe, the concept of human body dissection began in the 15th century, where barber surgeons used to demonstrate human structures at the instruction of the professor. Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) was the first medical student to dissect the human body and he also continued it as a professor.^[2] In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, United States Medical Education used grave robbers to meet the demand of corpses for dissection.

Anatomy Act

The Murder Act 1752 allowed the dissection of corpses of executed criminals in United Kingdome. How-ever the Anatomy Act was passed in Massachusetts of America in 1831 because of increased demand for cadavers for medical science. The Anatomy Act was passed in United Kingdome (U.K.) in 1832, which allowed his kin to donate the deceased's body.^[3]

Anatomy Act was enacted in India in 1948. It therefore provides for the collection of dead bodies for the purpose

of teaching. If death occurs in a state hospital or in a public place within the prescribed area of the medical institution provided that the police have declared a lapse of 48 hours without body applicants and can be used for medical purposes.^[4]

The Anatomy Act has been adopted in Gujarat as the 2011 Gujarat Anatomy Act. It legally provides the unclaimed body to the authority in-charge of an approved medical teaching institutions for the purpose of medical education or research including anatomical examination and dissection by a person of his body after his death.^[5]

Who can do body donation?

No age, gender, caste, religion, or socio-economic status can prevent anyone from donating his body. If any person, either in writing at any time or orally in the presence of two or more witnesses (may one of them be a next kin /close relative), has made a request for donation to the body for medical education or research purposes prior to his / her death. The person legally in possession of the body may donate the body to the authorized medical institution without any other related objects.^[6] The body can be accepted by any hospital / medical institution approved for medical education and research by the state government.

Body Donation Procedure

- A person willing to donate can identify a medical institution / organization that he / she wants to donate to the body. They can look up online or call these organizations or ask what research they are doing with cadavers and decide to donate the body.
- The approved institution's willingness form should be filled out, many of which are available online. In the presence of two legal witnesses, this form must be signed. At least one of these individuals is recommended to be a next kin / relative.
- The body donation plan should be discussed with the rest of the family so that they are aware of the organization with which the donor has signed up and can call the medical institution / organization as soon as possible after the donor's death so that they can arrange for the body to be transported. Or the next kin / relative should bring the body as soon as possible after death to the approved medical institution / organization. A death certificate will be arranged by the medical institution / organisation. Body can be donated even if it is not filled in the willingness form.
- All legal procedures are completed after the body has reached the institution and the body is then embalmed and further used for dissection or research purposes.

Rejection Criteria of A Body

Any individual, in addition to their sex, caste, age, is liable for entire body donation. However, since the body is to be used to study the human body's normal

structures, some of the donated bodies are not accepted if,

- An autopsy was conducted.
- Amputation occurred.
- The deceased had certain contagious / infectious / communicable diseases or was emaciated.
- Body of a medico-legal case (e.g. homicide, suicide)
- Decomposed bodies.
- Body with organs removed. (except eyes)

Factors Affecting Body Donation

While donating bodies is a major source of corpses, the number of people willing to donate bodies is small.^[7] Spirituality, religious beliefs and lack of awareness are the most important reason for less body donations in India. People have a dilemma that the body cannot be treated with dignity and respect.^[8] Medicos can't accept their own body's concept of dissection. Other reasons are body ownership love and fear the body may not be used for the right cause. It was also noted that while anatomists encourage body donation, they are not well known about their attitude towards body donation. Organ donation is preferred not only by the general population but also by the medical fraternity over whole body donation.^[9]

Factors Influencing Body Donation

Awareness of body donation, age, sex, education, occupation, attitude about religion, spirituality is some of the factors affecting body donation.

Armstrong noted in 1996 that younger age groups are more willing to donate than Australia's older age groups.^[10] Maryland Boulware et al (2002) observed in a study of households that older age groups are negatively associated with willingness to donate corpse organs. The males are also more inclined to donate to the body than the females. Boulware and others (2002),^[11] Alashek and so on. Al. (2009),^[12] The educated class is more prone to body donation than the less educated. The donors' concern about their religious beliefs and spirituality is also responsible for the low donation of the corpse.

Measures To Improve the Ratio Body Donation

It is necessary to take care of the various reasons listed above for less body donation. It is necessary to raise awareness of body donation and to change the mind-set of society towards it. Donation programs for the body should be designed and compulsory for all medical colleges should be made. Electronics, paper media and broad publicity by political and religious leaders, popular public figures should be used to start awareness campaigns.

In this field, the NGOs and social workers can play a significant role. During these campaigns, the holy word 'donation' (daan) may be stressed. Social honours, recognition and appropriate incentives such as health care facilities can be given to donors and their families. Donors should be assured that their bodies will be treated

with respect and dignity and that the remains of their bodies will be cremated after dissection and that the ashes will either be disposed of by the medical institute or returned for further disposal to the next kin / near relative if desired. In order to ensure respectful treatment of the students' cadavers, the inviolability of donated bodies and donor feelings should be stressed in the mind of the student. Proper body donation guidance and assistance should be readily available to people willing. Appropriate counselling of the donor's next kin should be done to honour the donor's will. The next kin must also be persuaded to donate their close ones' body. Some medical colleges in India are more than required to receive corpses, so appropriate legal measures should be taken to allow the transfer of corpses from one state to another as well as from one medical college to another. Cooperation between universities should be emphasized.

CONCLUSION

Donation of the whole body is a major source of corpses used for dissection, medical education, scientific studies and research purposes. The concept of body donation is unconscious to most people. Efforts to raise awareness of the importance of body donation should be made. In most countries and many institutes in our country, the body donation program is running successfully to meet their institute's need for cadavers. Despite this, body donation throughout the world remains suboptimal. Most people in India are not willing to become donors of the body. By stating the importance of body donation, there is a strong need to popularize the message to common masses. Efforts should be made to encourage discussions on whole-body donation to improve current low donation levels. The human being's consciousness development in the entire donation of the body lies in its social responsibilities. Death is part of life that is inevitable. Faced with options on what to do with your body after your last breath, please consider donating the whole body and helping to support medical research, education and training to improve patient care immediately and in the future.

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