The Doha Donation Accord Aligned With the Declaration of Istanbul: Implementations to Develop Deceased Organ Donation and Combat Commercialism

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Qatar is a Gulf peninsula country of approximately 1.7 million people, with a multicultural society of more than 80% non-citizen residents, mostly expatriate workers of Middle Eastern and Asian origin. Qatar ranks highly on the Human Development Index, with the highest health index in the Arab world (1). The first kidney transplant in Qatar was performed in 1986. Since then, lack of donors in Qatar has compelled most patients with end-stage renal disease to seek commercial transplantation abroad, returning to Qatar with high postoperative complications (68%) and a high early postoperative mortality of 12% (2, 3).

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) is the main tertiary healthcare facility in Qatar. Following the publication of the Declaration of Istanbul (DoI) in 2008 (4), HMC adopted the recommendations of the Declaration by launching the Doha Donation Accord (DDA) in 2010 (5). The DDA has been developed by HMC and the Qatari Supreme Council of Health, in consultation with the Declaration of Istanbul Custodian Group (DICG), so as to meet needs for transplantation locally, thereby discouraging Qatari patients from undergoing commercial transplantation abroad. The DDA is thus intended to develop deceased organ donation and live related kidney transplantation in Qatar, leading to the eventual achievement of national self-sufficiency.

Principles Underpinning the DDA

The primary objective of transplant policies and programs should be the promotion of health through provision of optimal care to both donors and recipients. Financial considerations or material gain of any party must not override consideration for the well-being of donors and recipients, nor influence the application of relevant organ allocation rules. Consistent with the Qatari Transplant law 21 of 1997 (6) and the World Health Organization Guiding Principles on Human Cell, Tissue and Organ transplantation (7), the DDA prohibits trade in human organs and financial rewards for organ donation. Qatar is notable for the fact that organs for transplantation are equitably allocated within Qatar to suitable Qataris and expatriate patients residing in Qatar alike, without regard to citizenship status.

The acts of heroism by all donors whether living or deceased are acknowledged by a representative of the Qatari government, awarding a medal of honor to the live donor or the deceased donor family in recognition of their gift of life.

DDA Provisions for Live Donors

A comprehensive health insurance for life while residing in Qatar is provided for the live related donor following donation and irrespective of the medical condition requiring care, regardless of their nationality or employment status.

A medical condition identified before donation that renders a potential donor medically unsuitable will be cared for without cost to the potential donor.

HMC covers expenses incurred during evaluation for donation and surrounding the donation procedure until discharge from hospital.

Disability insurance is provided in accordance with national norms if a disability occurs as a complication of the donation process, inclusive of the evaluation and postoperative periods.

If the live donor develops end-stage organ failure, they receive an allocation priority for transplantation.

Provisions of the DDA are accessible only by related live donors and recipients residing in Qatar (Qatari and expatriates), and not by visitors.
Transplantation was held in Doha, from April 12 to 14, 2013, to mark the fifth anniversary of the Declaration and to evaluate progress in implementing its principles and recommended proposals (10). Participants noted the encouraging development of organ donation in Qatar, recognizing that for the DDA to achieve its goals, a sustained progress in the deceased donation program is essential. The DDA is poised with the alliance of the DoI to establish a legacy of transplantation that is a celebration of the gift of life from one individual to another, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.

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REFERENCES