



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE

ORGAN DONATION FOR TRANSPLANTS

(7th October 1991)

abstract

The NBC deals with the issue of organ donation and consent for their removal with reference to minors and adults, without going into particular questions such as the taking of organs from anencephalic infants or the taking of bone marrow from a minor and foetal cell and tissue grafts.

Transplant surgery is defined as a safe and irreplaceable therapeutic opportunity, of which the contraindications and complications of a clinical nature have considerably decreased. However, the inadequate availability of organs for transplant is highlighted and the growing separation between therapeutic needs and real needs for intervention, which every year cause the death of thousands of patients. Nonetheless, the NBC recommends that the diagnosis of death be carried out with strict criteria independently of the possibility of the transplant of the organs.

Even in the awareness of the deep significance of the donation of organs out of solidarity and the therapeutic importance of transplant surgery which is no longer experimental, the ethical and juridical importance of consent to the taking of organs and tissues cannot be neglected. The discipline of consent is founded in the constitutional principles of the right to life and health, of the protection of the donor's personal dignity and of the family's right-duty to honour the bodies of their dear ones.

The committee recommends that a wide transplant culture be diffused, founded on values of solidarity and responsibility and that the expression of will of the potential donor receive the maximum valorisation at a normative level too. The donation must in any case be free and any hypothesis of organ commerce must be excluded, with interventions at a national and international level.

The opinion is followed by a personal remark.