

[Organ donation from recently deceased patients. Experiences from a donor hospital and suggestions for handling potential organ donors and their relatives].

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Publication year: 1992

Journal: Tidsskrift for den Norske lægeforening : tidsskrift for praktisk medicin, ny række

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Society: Unknown

Origin country: Norway

Target countries: Norway

PMID: 1462291

Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/1462291/>

Homologous organ transplantation using organs from patients suffering complete destruction of the brain and brain stem is a major achievement in modern medicine. The care of potential organ donors and their relatives is complex and very demanding for the medical team and nursing staff. In Norway the law sets very clear criteria (documentation of total irreversible brain and brain stem injury) for performing donation. As a rule consent from the family is asked for, although not legally required. This article deals with the problems related to the treatment of potential organ donors. We give practical guidelines for medical staff on how to prepare the patient and his/her family, with emphasis on the human and psychosocial aspects. Preservation of the donor and the organs is not discussed.