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Session Title : Deceased Organ Donation and Transplantation Education (Medical Students)

Deceased Organ Donation and Transplantation Education in Malaysia

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Lecture Abstract: Deceased Organ Donation and Transplantation Education in Malaysia

Dr Ghazali Ahmad. Consultant Nephrologist. National Heart Institute, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. **Vitallink Symposium 2, ATW Seoul. November 16 2023** It took 20 years after the first successful renal transplant involving the identical twins, Herrick brothers, in Boston USA, before solid organ transplant program started in Malaysia in 1975 also involving a sibling live donor-recipient pair. This occurred a year after the gazettelement of the Human Transplant Act (HTA1974) which paved the way for organ harvesting from deceased donor for tissue or organ transplant from deceased donors. The first deceased donor kidney transplant took place in 1976. However, the next kidney transplant from a deceased donor only occurred in 1992. Liver transplant started in 1993 from a live donor, while heart and lung transplant only started in the year 1997 and 2005 respectively. Meanwhile, a large build-up of patients listed for deceased donor kidney transplants occurred when the number of patients with end stage kidney failure rose exponentially after access to publicly subsidized dialysis therapy became available nationwide from the mid-90s. Since the legislated HTA only permits organ removal from deceased persons who had consented while alive, i.e an-opting in system, a central national database of organ pledgers was set up by the Ministry of Health with a parallel establishment of the National Transplant Resource Centre in 1997, tasked to organize public awareness campaigns on the virtues and importance of organ donation. Training and educational program were also organized to equip healthcare staffs especially those working in the critical care and intensive care areas, on the concept, diagnosis of brain death, identification and management of potential deceased organ donors, handling and approaching grieving family members of potential organ donors and other processes related to organ retrieval and transfer to transplant centers. However, cultural, religious and technical barriers remain in the way which prevent significant increase in the number of organ donation and transplantation. New Strategies were promulgated to increase the awareness on the importance of organ donation and the needs for large number of organs to save so many lives. These include informal and formal educational program for the public, healthcare workers and students in various levels of education from primary school, to colleges, tertiary institutions, junior doctors and more

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senior clinicians. Such program includes 'The Young Doctors' extracurricular module in the primary school, lectures, exhibitions and promotion of awareness in the community and university involving students, inclusion of a module on organ donation and transplantation in the orientation program for newly employed house officers and regular training program for hospital- based members of Tissue and Organ Procurement teams. Since 2020, a collaborative certificate program, ODISSea (Organ Donation Innovative Strategies for South East Asia), involving several local universities and the Donation and Transplant Institute, University of Barcelona was organized to train hospital-based doctors to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify potential deceased donors in critical care areas, manage grieving relatives and increase the number of deceased organ donation for transplantation. A new initiative was also taken by University Malaya Medical Centre to set up the 'Silent Mentor' program to encourage whole body donation for medical education and research which increases the awareness among medical students and family members of the donors, on the virtues and benefits of organ and whole- body donation. While all these educational programs are useful to improve public knowledge, awareness and community support for organ donation, they need to occur continuously and must be accompanied by other concurrent definitive actions to produce an actual increase in organ donation and transplantation, as knowledge and awareness may not necessarily translate to actual practice.