

Category : **Ethical issues/end-of-life**

A169 - Protocol-driven detection of potential organ donors in a german emergency department

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Introduction:

The detection of potential organ donors is a fundamental step to meet patients' wishes in end-of-life-care as well as the demand for transplantable organs. Organ donation (OD) after neurologic determination of death is the only accepted legal option in Germany. A guideline recently issued by the German Medical Association encourages ICU staff to check for clinical imminent brain death in patients and evaluate patients' wishes in this regard.

International literature suggests a protocol-driven approach immediately in the emergency department (ED) to increase the detection of potential organ donors.

Methods:

A written protocol was implemented in the ED of a tertiary university hospital. The protocol was developed by an interdisciplinary team consisting of emergency medicine, neurology, medical ethics, and the local organ donation coordination. The protocol included a pathway for the identification of potential donors, consultations of relatives, pathways for initiation of treatment.

Results:

About 50,000 patients (primarily adults) seek help in the ED per year. About 2,000 of those are critically ill and have to be treated in the resuscitation area. The protocol was implemented in April 2021. During the following 6 months (04-10/2021) 2 additional patients were recognized by using this protocol. Intensive care support was established in these patients in the ED following patients' wishes in favor of organ donation. The resulting 2 successful OD contributed to the hospital's overall 12 OD during the observed time period (17%).

Conclusion:

ED staff plays a central role in the detection of patients who are at imminent risk to develop brain death. Evaluating patients' wishes early in the ED and subsequent introduction of intensive care means can relevantly contribute to the number of successful OD and organ transplantations.