

Muslim scholars of the most prestigious academies are unanimous in declaring that organ donation is an act of merit and in certain circumstances can be an obligation.

These institutes all call upon Muslims to donate organs for transplantation:

- the Shariah Academy of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (representing all Muslim countries)
- the Grand Ulema Council of Saudi Arabia
- the Iranian Religious Authority
- the Al-Azhar Academy of Egypt

Organ donation is a great gift but more donors are needed

Everyone can make a difference
Please

- Talk to your family
- Register your wishes
- Carry a donor card

To find out more about organ donation, or to join the NHS Organ Donor Register, contact:

The Organ Donor Line
0845 60 60 400

www.uktransplant.org.uk

Information on Islam is available from:
www.bbc.co.uk/religion

Transplants save lives



Islam and Organ Donation

A guide to organ donation
and Muslim beliefs



Organ donation

Organ donation is the gift of an organ to help someone else who needs a transplant. Hundreds of people's lives are saved each year by organ transplants. Organs that can be donated by people who have died include the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas and small bowel. Tissue such as skin, bone, heart valves and corneas can also be used to help others.

When can organ donation take place?

Doctors and nurses are committed to doing everything possible to save life. Organs are only removed for transplantation once all attempts to save life have failed and after death has been certified by a doctor or doctors who are entirely independent of the transplant team.

Most donated organs come from people who die from a severe brain injury and who receive treatment on a ventilator in an intensive care unit. The brain injury damages vital centres in the brain stem which are essential to maintain life. No one can live once these centres have been destroyed. Tests can show conclusively when this has happened.

In some circumstances, patients who die in hospital but are not on a ventilator may also donate. They are called non-heartbeating donors.

Sometimes people who do not die in hospital can become tissue donors.

Consent

The consent, or lack of objection, of those closest to the patient is always sought before organs can be donated. This is why it is so important for people to discuss their wishes with their loved ones. Donation is an individual choice and views differ even within the same religious groups. Many families who agree to organ donation have said that it helps to know some good has come from their loss.

Care and respect

The removal of organs is carried out with the greatest care and respect. The family can see the body afterwards and staff can contact a chaplain or local religious leader if the family wishes.

Islam and organ donation

One of the basic aims of the Muslim faith is the saving of life. This is a fundamental aim of the Shariah and Allah greatly rewards those who save others from death.

Violating the human body, whether living or dead, is normally forbidden in Islam. The Shariah, however, waives this prohibition in a number of instances: firstly in cases of necessity; and secondly in saving another person's life. It is this Islamic legal maxim *al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat* (necessities overrule prohibition) that has great relevance to organ donation.

"Whosoever saves the life of one person it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind."

Holy Qur'an, chapter 5 vs. 32

"If you happened to be ill and in need of a transplant, you certainly would wish that someone would help you by providing the needed organ."

Sheikh Dr MA Zaki Badawi, Principal, Muslim College, London

Summary of the life-saving Fatwa:

The Muslim Law (Shariah) Council of Great Britain resolved that:

- the medical profession is the proper authority to define signs of death
- current medical knowledge considers brain stem death to be a proper definition of death
- the council accepts brain stem death as constituting the end of life for the purpose of organ transplantation
- the council supports organ transplantation as a means of alleviating pain or saving life on the basis of the rules of the Shariah
- Muslims may carry donor cards
- the next of kin of a dead person, in the absence of a donor card or an expressed wish to donate their organs, may give permission to obtain organs from the body to save other people's lives
- organ donation must be given freely without reward
- trading in organs is prohibited

"Whosoever helps another will be granted help from Allah."

Prophet Muhammed (pbuh)