



The United Church of Canada General Council

GCE Animal to human transplants (Xenotransplantation) (DMC 6-11)

True Document Date

April 28, 2002

WHEREAS viable alternatives exist to xenotransplantation - both in the immediate and long-term - that could more effectively address the shortage of organs and tissues for transplant with significantly fewer risks and costs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

(2002-04-26-0341)

That the Executive of the General Council, through the appropriate units and courts of the United Church,

- a. Advocate for a more effective donor registry or card program, ensuring that donor consent is indicated directly on health cards;
- b. Actively solicit participation in the organ donor registry or card program at a congregational level;
- c. Advocate for a national publicity/educational campaign in support of organ donation, living wills, and instruction to proxy or substitute decision makers, as well as for education in schools on organ donation;

- d. Advocate for preventative health measures, aimed at reducing the need for organ and tissue transplants,
- e. Advocate for programs designed to train teams of health professionals to counsel the families of potential organ donors;
- f. Encourage the study of changes to the current legislative framework for organ donations that might further facilitate organ and tissue donations;

WHEREAS animal-to-human organ and tissue transplantation poses significant risks both to transplant patients and to society at large - including the possibility of new diseases crossing the species barrier and causing future epidemics; and,

WHEREAS the quality of life for animal-to-human organ transplant recipients is likely to be much lower than those receiving transplants from human donors; and

WHEREAS the cost of xenotransplant research is very high, uses valuable scientific resources, and could in itself introduce unacceptable risks related to cross-species disease transmission; and

WHEREAS viable alternatives exist - both in the immediate and long-term - that could more effectively address the shortage of organs and tissues for transplant with significantly fewer risks and costs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

(2002-04-26-0342)

That the Executive of the General Council:

- a. Calls for increased funding for medical research into alternative ways of addressing the organ transplant shortage, particularly research seeking ways to expand the potential pool of human organs available for transplant.
- b. Calls for the suspension of both government and corporate funding - direct and indirect - for enotransplantation research.

WHEREAS animal-to-human organ and tissue transplantation poses significant risks both to transplant patients and to society at large - including the possibility of new diseases crossing the species barrier and causing future epidemics; and

WHEREAS the quality of life for animal-to-human organ transplant recipients is likely to be much lower than those receiving transplants from human donors; and

WHEREAS the cost of xenotransplants will be very costly, putting additional strains on our public health care system;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

(2002-04-26-0343)

That the Executive of the General Council of The United Church of Canada supports a complete and immediate prohibition on animal-to-human organ and tissue transplantation, including any proposals to begin human clinical trials. It is to be noted that such procedures as heart valves and temporary skin grafts do not have their own blood supply and do not raise issues of rejection by the recipient, and therefore, are in a different category in terms of risk, and are not subject to this prohibition.

The Executive of the General Council Meeting, April 26-29, 2002, pp. 139-140

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