



MINISTERO DELLA SALUTE

Istituto Superiore di Sanità
Centro Nazionale Trapianti

TRANSLATION of
Ministerial Decision DGPRES 0007939-P-
10/03/2020



WHO Collaborating Centre
On Vigilance and Surveillance for
Human Cells, Tissues and Organs

Subject: Covid-19 epidemic emergency: organ, tissues and cells donation and transplantation activities from deceased donors.

We would first like to thank the Regions and Autonomous Provinces for their effort in the management of patients affected by Covid-19 and in tackling the spread of the infection, at this critical time of emergency.

In order to deal with the ongoing emergency, many regions have currently been re-evaluating the organizational arrangement of their Regional Health Networks, by implementing, in some hospitals, the suspension of a number of activities, from outpatient ones to elective surgery.

In the last few days, some hospitals have reported their intention to include in the field of elective surgery, the activities of organ and tissues retrieval and transplantation from deceased donors, thus suspending these activities.

Therefore, it is necessary to highlight that transplant surgical interventions have a nature of urgency due to the availability of the donor which is a condition that cannot be planned out and that is crucial in order for the transplant to occur. Transplantation, in fact, represents an essential level of healthcare and a lifesaving treatment for many patients.

It is already well-known that, in standard healthcare conditions, the scarce availability of such a resource, represents a limit for the treatment and care of many patients enrolled in the waiting lists. It is therefore more likely and alarming that, at this time of emergency, a further decrease of such resources may occur.

Therefore, while being perfectly aware of the enormous difficulties that Regional Health Systems are now facing, especially those of the regions most affected by the Covid-19 emergency, we ask these Regions for their fundamental support in keeping and including donation and transplantation activities as part of their urgent activities, when planning and re-organizing their services.

While being firmly aware of the exceptional nature of the situation being faced by the whole National Healthcare System, and understanding the imbalance between the patients' needs and the resources available, especially in those regions most affected by the emergency, we urge to pay particular attention to avoid the unjustified discrimination of transplanted patients, as far as their access to intensive treatments and their potential suspension is concerned.

Finally, with reference to the measures to prevent the spread of the infection adopted by some regions, following the new measures introduced by the Prime Minister's Decree of March 8th, 2020 (Further amendments to the decree of February 23rd, 2020, nr. 6, on urgent measures for

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containing and managing the Covid-19 epidemic emergency), we believe they should not be applied to surgical teams that may be travelling to reach hospitals in order to perform their activity of organ retrieval, as an essential healthcare activity.

We confide in the strongest collaboration, which never lacked during this particular time, and we join the Italian National Transplant Centre, in expressing our availability to discuss, face and overcome synergistically such issues.