



National Kidney Foundation™

STATEMENT AGAINST TRANSPLANT TOURISM

Transplant candidates and professionals should be aware that there are many potential risks and ethical concerns in “transplant tourism”, the practice of traveling outside the U.S. to receive an organ transplant. These risks may include the possibility of exploitation of donors through coercive practices including paid or forced donation.

Other risks of transplant tourism may include the possibility of disease transmission; poor surgical practices and lack of follow up care for both donor and recipient.

The National Kidney Foundation is sympathetic to the plight of transplant candidates who are seeking transplantation. The NKF has worked diligently to advocate for responsible and ethically acceptable ways to increase donation that uphold the public trust in the transplant system. These include the reimbursement of direct expenses incurred by living donors (such as travel and lost wages), honoring documented decisions in favor of organ donation (first person consent) in the case of deceased donor organs, the endorsement of the 2006 revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, early referral and early transplantation, improving outcomes for recipients, development of guidelines on transplantation, and the efforts of the Organ Donation and Transplant Breakthrough Collaborative.

NKF, therefore, advocates and will increase its efforts to ensure that all potential transplant recipients are able to make informed decisions about traveling to some parts of the world for a transplant.

January 2007

National Kidney Foundation Backgrounder

about Alleged Human Rights Violations in Organ Donation

August 15, 2006

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) is deeply concerned about recent allegations regarding the procurement of organs and tissues through coercive or exploitative practices abroad, or practices which violate worldwide human rights standards.

The “Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Practitioners in China”, from Canadian human rights attorney David Matas and former Canadian Minister of State David Kilgour, alleges that large numbers of Falun Gong* practitioners in China are being imprisoned and executed for the purposes of organ or tissue donation.

If these allegations prove true, they represent a systematic and widespread violation of human rights against thousands, or potentially tens of thousands, of innocent persons.

The National Kidney Foundation is opposed to any persecution of individuals because of their religious or political beliefs. The NKF also remains committed to the principles of informed consent and free choice with regard to the decision about whether to be an organ or tissue donor.

In addition, any act which calls the ethical practice of donation and transplantation into question should be condemned by the worldwide transplantation community, which seeks to extend and improve the lives of those waiting for a transplant through responsible and ethical means.

Transplant Tourism

In addition to these allegations, the NKF remains concerned about other practices which may lead to exploitation or coercion of potential donors worldwide. Transplant candidates and professionals should be aware that there are other risks in so-called “transplant tourism” (traveling to any another country for the purposes of transplantation). These risks may include the possibility of exploitation of the donors through coercive practices including paid donation.

The NKF remains opposed to any system of reimbursement for deceased or living donation, which may create an added financial incentive for abuses in donation and transplantation. Other risks of “transplant tourism” may include the possibility of disease transmission; poor surgical practices; or poor follow up care for both donor and recipient.

** According to the report, Falun Gong is a spiritual path that includes elements of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, teaching meditation exercises and promoting*

physical and spiritual health. Its followers seek to promote truth, tolerance and compassion.

References:

1. Matas, David and David Kilgour. "Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China". <http://investigation.go.saveinter.net>
2. China Harvesting Falun Gong Organs, Report
Alleges: <http://www.cbc.ca/story/canada/national/2006/07/06/china-falungong.html>
3. Article about British Transplantation Society (BTS) statement:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4921116.stm>
4. OPTN/UNOS Board Opposes "Transplant Tourism".