
23rd Punjab Bioethics Group Meeting

SHALAMAR MEDICAL & DENTAL COLLEGE,
LAHORE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 01, 2024

CALL TO ORDER:

The 23rd meeting of the **Punjab Bioethics Group** was held virtually on Friday, November 01, 2024, and was moderated by Dr. Sarosh Saleem. The meeting lasted two hour. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved by the members. The meeting involved discussions of global timeline of successful transplants, PHOTA Structure & Evaluation Process, Actions against Illegal Transplantation, End-Organ Failure Registry, Types of Organ Donors, Provincial Organ Donor Registry, Fatwas and Religious Support and Public Awareness, was attended by professionals from various institutes in Pakistan. Participants engaged actively in the discussions.

ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Dr. Raja Sajjad Asghar, Dr. Sarosh Saleem, Dr. Jamshed Akhtar, Dr. Faiza Farooq, Dr. Farkhanda Ghafoor, Dr. Aamir Bashir, Ms. Naseem Rafiq, Ms. Mehtab, Dr Fareeha Farooq.

AGENDA:

Dr. Raja Sajjad Asghar, Director of Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority, Lahore, will discuss "Legal Perspectives of Organ Transplantation in Punjab-Pakistan."

NEW BUSINESS:

Topic: Dr. Raja Sajjad Asghar, Director at PHOTA-Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority, presented, including the historical development of organ transplantation in Pakistan, PHOTA's efforts to regulate and support organ donation, and the tools being used to curb illegal transplantation and increase public participation in organ donation.

DISCUSSION & SUGGESTIONS:

Kidney transplants began in Pakistan in 1979 with living related donors in public hospitals. The first successful kidney transplant in Pakistan was performed at Quaid-e-Azam International

Hospital (Q.I.H) in the federal capital whereas The Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority (PHOTA) was established in 2017.

Dr. Asghar shared PHOTA Structure & Evaluation Process that Over 10,783 organ transplantation cases have been approved by PHOTA and Evaluation Committees composed of Surgical and medical specialists, transplant specialists, nephrologists, gastroenterologists, neurophysicians, intensivists, and local notables.

Dr Raja Sajjad told us that PHOTA has identified multiple illegal transplant activities in Punjab; 39 FIRs were filed, and 40 cases are under trial in courts. Four convictions made, including the dismissal of 3 government employees (doctors and OT attendant).PHOTA collaborates with NADRA to verify donor-recipient relationships using CNICs and FRCs.

He briefed two types of donors Living Donors and Deceased Donors and the Organs and Tissues That Can Be Donated:

Organs: Liver, kidney, lungs, heart, pancreas, intestine.

Tissues: Cornea, bone, skin, heart valves, blood vessels, nerves, tendons.

Mr Raja told us that 289 individuals have registered as organ donors for post-mortem donation. PHOTA is creating a registry for end-organ failure, which will help allocate deceased organs according to UN criteria in Punjab.

While discussing about fatwas and religious support he said PHOTA has received formal fatwas from Islamic scholars supporting cadaveric (deceased) organ transplantation, which helps in promoting public acceptance.

Dr. Raja Sajjad Asghar added that PHOTA runs awareness campaigns in print and electronic media to encourage both living and cadaveric organ donations.

At the end, Online Services has been discussed by Mr. Asghar that PHOTA has implemented several online services for public convenience: Complaint Management System, Whistle Blowing System, Voluntary Donor Registration and Patient Registration.

The discussions regarding the organ donation ranged from logistic issues that can be anticipated in implementing these organ donation laws and policies to how death can be defined. There was a discussion among members about brain death, cardiovascular death and how ambiguity surrounds definition of death and organ donation. The members also raised other ethical and

legal issues that pertain to organ donation in Pakistan like opting in or out of organ donation. Overall, all the members were thankful to Dr. Asghar for sharing insights about organ donation in Pakistan and particularly Punjab.

FINAL STATEMENT FROM PBG:

There is more to organ transplantation law and policies in Pakistan than we know. However, there is a need for clinicians, theologians, ethicists and law professionals to deliberate about the core issues of definition of death and organ donation and bring some resolution to the ethical issues hanging in air.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by the moderator Dr. Sarosh Saleem with thanks to all attendees for their support, encouragement, and valuable contributions. The next meeting is scheduled for January 03, 2025, at 09:30 AM.

Minutes Recorded by

Ms. Huda Behzad