Cooperation between Countries of the Black Sea Area (BSA): Development of the Activities Related to Donation and Transplantation of Organs, Tissues and Cells

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Human to human (allogeneic) transplantation of cells, tissues and organs has become the best and often the only treatment for a wide range of end stage organ failure. However, as the number of transplants has grown rapidly over the past two decades, the demand for human transplantation has also increased, resulting in a continuing shortage of human material, particularly organs, with the risk of encouraging unethical practices.

The development of organ transplantation in the countries of the Black Sea Area (BSA) dates back from the late 1970s; mainly in the form of kidney transplants from Non-Heart Beating Donors (NHBD). From the early 1990s, activities in the field of transplantation began to decline and, in some countries, have ceased.

Over the last few years, the Council of Europe (CoE) and World Health Organization (WHO) began implementing some projects that supported the development of a common and constructive attitude towards various transplantation issues in these countries. Efforts were mainly directed towards the development of effective legislative frameworks and the establishment of national transplant authorities and national transplant programmes. The cooperation with Moldova is a good example of these efforts.

It is important to note that donation and transplantation of cells, tissues and organs raise ethical and legal issues that need to be addressed according to various cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is important to identify and share experiences from local initiatives which could provide models for implementation of safe donation and transplantation processes.

The work of the Council of Europe in the area of organ transplantation started in the 1950s. The relevant committee is the European Committee on Organ Transplantation (CD-P-TO), which focuses on the elaboration of high ethical, quality and safety standards in the field of organ, tissues and cells transplantation, promoting the principle of non-commercialisation of organ donation and strengthening the measures to avoid organ trafficking.

THE PROJECT AND KEY PLAYERS

Based on the Council of Europe recommendations and the experience gained by the experts from the CD-P-TO in other programmes in the BSA, the CD-P-TO has now started a collaborative project through which a regional strategy will be channeled to promote transplantation activities in the area.

The Council of Europe member states from the BSA (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Rumania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine) will, through this project, start a long term regional cooperation in order to structure, develop and strengthen activities and programmes related to the donation and transplantation of organs, tissues and cells.

A kick-off meeting, organized regionally in Chisinau (Moldova), launched the project on 1-2 July 2011. It gathered professionals from the transplantation and/or the organisational system nominated by their respective Ministries of Health. Specialists in the field of transplantation from countries with established transplant systems, such as France, Italy and Spain, participated and met together with experts from the partner countries of the Black Sea Area.

An Advisory Board of experts from France, Italy, Spain and Germany will follow and support the progress of the BSA PROJECT.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- to review the existing laws on transplantation of organs, tissues and cells and to promote the implementation of an effective legislative framework;
- to contribute to the establishment of national transplant authorities and national transplant programmes where these do not exist, and to support efforts in strengthening existing transplant services;
- to educate the public, professionals and media about transplantation and the need for services to be developed in the countries involved in the project;
- to establish action plans for training and to identify areas where additional specialist expertise or training are required as the basis for a training and professional development strategy;
- to elaborate recommendations and documents of consensus that are agreed upon by all the participants;
- to encourage networking and enhance international co-operation;
- to establish pilot actions to be developed in specific settings.

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BSA TRANSPLANT NETWORK DATA

Data related to national donation and transplantation activities from all the BSA countries has been collected. This information provides an updated overview of the legal and organisational situation in the participating countries and sets ground for future regional priorities for action. Future data collections will improve the picture and allow following the trends and progress. A summary of this information is shown in the Tables below.

SECTION 1: LEGISLATIVE ASPECTS	*Armenia*	*Azerbaijan*	*Bulgaria*	*Georgia*	*Moldova*	*Romania*	*Russia*	*Turkey*	*Ukranie*
Regulatory framework on organ transplantation and donation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Regulatory framework on death diagnosis	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Law concerning prohibition of organ trafficking	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Presumed consent (PC) or informed consent (IC) legislation	PC	PC	PC	IC	PC	IC	PC	IC	PC
Donor or non-donor registry	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO

SECTION 2: NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	*Armenia*	*Azerbaijan*	*Bulgaria*	*Georgia*	*Moldova*	*Romania*	*Russia*	*Turkey*	*Ukranie*
Government recognized authority responsible for overseeing & supporting donation & transplantation (national level)	YES	NO	YES	YES*	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Specific organization/institution responsible for national coordination of donation and transplantation activities	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Periodic reports on donation and transplantation	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Ethical Committee dealing with transplant activities nationally or regionally	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES

* Non official.

SECTION 3: ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS	*Armenia*	*Azerbaijan*	*Bulgaria*	*Georgia*	*Moldova*	*Romania*	*Russia*	*Turkey*	*Ukranie*
Training programs to harmonize practices for staff involved in organ procurement	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Training programs to harmonize practices for staff involved in organ transplantation	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adequate and continuous education campaigns	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
Educational campaigns in schools or universities	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO

SECTION 4: TRANSPLANT ACTIVITY									
4.1. Number of transplant centres in participating countries									
Type of transplant activity	*Armenia*	*Azerbaijan*	*Bulgaria*	*Georgia*	*Moldova*	*Romania*	*Russia*	*Turkey*	*Ukranie*
Kidney	1	2	4	2	2	5	31	59	7
Liver	0	1	2	0	2	1	11	34	2
Pancreas	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	5	0
Heart / Lung	0	0	2/0	0	1	2/1	7	14	2
4.2. Number of transplant performed in 2010 in participating countries									
Kidney	8	2	48	8	0	212	1.037	2.502	82
Liver	0	10	15	0	0	51	209	695	12
Pancreas	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	29	0
Heart / Lung	0	0	5/0	0	0	7/0	47	89	1
4.3. Number of patients on the waiting list at the end of 2010 in participating countries									
Kidney	8	150	915	0	0	2.661	950	17.033	900
Liver	0	20	26	0	0	453	500	1.484	0
Pancreas	0	0	0	0	0	73	100	182	0
Heart / Lung	0	0	25/0	0	0	166/25	250	218	16